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Solomon Wank

In the Twilight of Empire

Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854–1912)
Imperial Habsburg Patriot and Statesman

Volume 1: The Making of an Imperial
Habsburg Patriot and Statesman



Count Aehrenthal, Austro-Hungarian foreign minister (1906–1912), is well-known to diplomatic historians for the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. Solomon Wank's biography, the first since 1917, shows that Aehrenthal's life and work transcend diplomatic history and illuminate critical problems threatening the viability of the Habsburg Monarchy. Wank focuses on the inseparable connection between foreign and internal affairs in Aehrenthal's thinking, his involvement in domestic politics, his attempt to transform the office of the foreign minister into that of an imperial chancellor, his grand scheme of constitutional reform to solve the South Slav problem within the empire, and his personality. The work is based on unpublished documents in Austrian and Czech archives, as well as recently published correspondence with Habsburg diplomats and aristocratic relatives and friends, and with his parents. Volume I covers the history of the Aehrenthal family, Aehrenthal's early years and education, his personality and political outlook, his diplomatic career and his involvement in domestic politics from 1878 to the eve of appointment as foreign minister.

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Solomon Wank

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Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854–1912),
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BÖHLAU VERLAG WIEN · KÖLN · WEIMAR

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For my wife, Barbara Wank



The basis of the evil that is sapping the life of the monarchy is the defective solution of the nationality question. The hereditary defect of the Austrian — pessimism — is already gripping the young and threatens to stifle their every idealistic impulse, every interest in the state and in the feeling of solidarity with the state. These are pathological manifestations, which deserve the most serious consideration, for it is a question of nothing less than the rescue of the young on the threshold of maturity who are called on to form the support of the throne and the fatherland.

— Baron Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal, 1899

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A NOTE ON NAMES, PLACES, AND DATES

Most of the documents used in this work were originally written in German. Therefore, except in those cases in which there are generally well-established English equivalents (e.g., Vienna, Prague, Bohemia), German name designations will be used. Where the German designation is not the same as the native name, as in the Bohemian and Moravian lands, the native designation will be given along with the German the first time a place is mentioned. In the citation of archival sources in the present-day Czech Republic, the native name is given first followed by the German.

Many of the individuals in this work are diplomats, and I have rendered their names as they appear in the foreign ministry's annually published *Jahrbuch des k. u. k. Auswärtigen Dienstes*. All first names there are translated into German, while family names are given in their ethnic spelling. I have followed that practice for nondiplomats. Most of the Bohemian nobles who corresponded with Aehrenthal spoke German as their mother tongue. The names of rulers well established in English-language historical literature are used here, e.g., Francis Joseph instead of Franz Joseph.

The name "Austria" is used throughout to refer to what after the Compromise of 1867 was legally designated as "the kingdoms and lands represented in the *Reichsrat* [parliament]" but commonly known as Austria. Occasionally, Austria is referred to as Cisleithania and Hungary as Transleithania. Those names were derived from the Leitha, a small tributary of the Danube southeast of Vienna that separated the two parts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy for a short stretch between Lower Austria and West Hungary. The Habsburg lands in their entirety are referred to variously as the monarchy, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Habsburg Empire, Austria-Hungary, Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the Dual Monarchy, or the Danubian Monarchy. The prefix "Austro," as in "Austro-Russian relations," means "Austria-Hungary" and not "Austria."

The foreign offices of all the major European powers before 1914 were referred to at times by their locations in their respective capital cities: Austria-Hungary — Ballhausplatz, France — Quai d'Orsay, Germany — Wilhelmstrasse, Great Britain — Whitehall, Italy — Quirinal or Consulta, Russia — Sāngerbrücke (Choristers' Bridge), Ottoman Empire (Turkey) — Porte.

The Russian foreign office was at times referred to by Austro-Hungarian and German diplomats by the German name for the bridge. The Russian name, with the same meaning, is *Pevcheskii Most*. The bridge, which spanned the Neva River, was named for the nearby building that housed the men's choir that held forth in the church attended by the imperial family and court

nobility. The foreign ministry was located along the river, and Aehrenthal's use of the expression "the men on the Neva" is a reference to it.

All dates are according to the Western (Gregorian) calendar, which was twelve days ahead of the Julian calendar used by most Orthodox Christians in the nineteenth century and thirteen days ahead in the twentieth.

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from foreign languages are by the author.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Castle Gross-Skal/Hrubá Skála, postcard, not dated (possession of the author)
2. Castle Doxan/Doksany, postcard, not dated (possession of the author)
3. Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal as a young diplomat, photograph, not dated (Nachlass Josef Redlich, in the possession of Professor Fritz Fellner, Vienna)
4. Paula Lexa von Aehrenthal, photograph, 1902 (Austrian National Library, Bildarchiv)
5. Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal, photograph, 1906 (Austrian National Library, Bildarchiv)
6. Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal with children Johann and Caroline, photograph, 1911 (Austrian National Library, Bildarchiv)

Cover Illustration: Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal in the gala uniform of a Habsburg foreign minister, reprinted with permission of the Aehrenthal family, Vienna

ABBREVIATIONS

1. Archival Sources

Unless otherwise indicated, carton numbers follow after the name of the archive in the footnote, e.g., SAL, RAA/122

ANM	Archiv Národního Muzea v Praze [Prague], Pozůstalost Karel Kramář
AR	Administrative Registratur
AVA	Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Vienna
BA	Botschaftsarchiv
CdM	Cabinett des Ministers
HHStA	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna
Ins.	Instructions/Weisungen
KA	Kriegsarchiv, Vienna
MKFF	Militärkanzlei Franz Ferdinand
NA	Nachlass Aehrenthal
NatArchive	National Archive, Washington, D.C., Microfilmed German Records, cited by reel number and file name
NBa	Nachlass Baernreither
NF	Nachlass Friedjung
NM	Nachlass Mérey
NMa	Nachlass Macchio
NMe	Nachlass Mensdorff
NS	Nachlass Schiessl
NSz	Nachlass Szápáry
PRO/FO	Public Record Office/Foreign Office, London, cited by series number and file number
PA	Politisches Archiv
PvL	Private Diplomatic Letter/Privatschreiben
R	Report/Bericht
RAA	Rodinný Archiv Aehrenthalové
RABe	Rodinný Archiv Berchtoldů
RABu	Rodinný Archiv Buquoyů
RAS	Rodinný Archiv Schwarzenbergů
RAT-H	Rodinný Archiv Thun-Hohensteinové
RAT-S	Rodinný Archiv Thunové-Salm
SAD	Státní Archiv Děčín/Tetschen
SAK	Státní Archiv Klášterec/Klösterle

SAL	Státní Archiv Litoměřice/Leitmeritz (branch at Žitenice/Schützenitz)
SAT	Státní Archiv Třeboň/Wittingau-Orlík/Worlik
SAU-H	Státní Archiv Uherské Hradiště/Ungarisch Hradisch
Stb/HS	Stadt- und Landesbibliothek/Handschriftensammlung, Vienna
T.	Telegram

2. Printed Sources

- Adlgasser Franz Adlgasser, ed., *Die Aehrenthals: Eine Familie in ihrer Korrespondenz, 1872–1911* (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 2002). Cited by volume and page number.
- BD *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914* (London, 1926–1938). Cited by volume and document number.
- DDF *Documents diplomatiques français, 1871–1914* (Paris, 1929–1959). Cited by series, volume, and document number.
- Friedjung Heinrich Friedjung, *Geschichte in Gesprächen: Aufzeichnungen 1898–1919*, vols. 1 and 2, Franz Adlgasser and Margret Friedrich, eds. (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 1997). Cited by volume and page number.
- GP *Die Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette, 1871–1914* (Berlin, 1922–1927). Cited by volume and document number.
- MÖSTA *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*
 ÖUA *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der Bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914* (Vienna–Leipzig, 1930). Cited by volume and document number.
- Rutkowski Ernst Rutkowski, ed., *Briefe und Dokumente zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des böhmisch-mährischen Raumes*. Parts 1 and 2: *Der Verfassungstreue Grossgrundbesitz 1880–1904* (Munich, 1983, 1991). Cited by volume and document number.
- Wank Solomon Wank, ed., *Aus dem Nachlass Aehrenthal: Briefe und Dokumente zur österreichisch-ungarischen Innen- und Aussenpolitik 1885–1912*, parts 1 and 2 (Graz, 1994). Cited by volume and document number.

PREFACE

This biography of Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal, Austro-Hungarian diplomat and foreign minister (1906–1912), was written over a long period of time, with several interruptions for other research and writing projects. The research began in Vienna in 1958, two years after the Austrian government allowed unrestricted access to all documents deposited in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA) pertaining to the Habsburg Monarchy down to its dissolution in October 1918. The fruits of that research became the basis for my doctoral dissertation, "Aehrenthal and the Policy of Action, 1906–1908" (Columbia University, 1961). The dissertation drew not only on Foreign Ministry documents, but on letters to and from Aehrenthal by diplomatic colleagues, prominent political figures, and aristocratic friends preserved in his and their private papers (*Nachlässe*), and likewise in the HHStA.¹

What drew me to write about Aehrenthal in the first place was that as foreign minister during a crucial time, he obviously was an important figure in Habsburg history, and the empire that he served was central to problems of European power relations and of nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet little was known about his personality and the motivation behind his policy of action despite three thousand pages of documents on the Aehrenthal era in the first three volumes of diplomatic documents related to the origins of the First World War.² There are, of course, no memoirs since he died in office. Berthold Molden's *Alois Graf Aehrenthal: Sechs Jahre äussere Politik Oesterreich-Ungarns* (Stuttgart, 1917) was, until now, the only biography of him in existence. Molden's brief book is an apologia intended as a justification of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and of the declaration of war against Serbia in 1914, as well as a paeon to the Austro-German alliance during the First World War.³ Two exhaustive studies of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in October 1908, the high point of Aehrenthal's bold policy of action,

1 Many of these letters have been published in Solomon Wank, ed., with the assistance of Christina M. Grafinger and Franz Adlgasser, *Aus dem Nachlass Aehrenthal: Briefe und Dokumente zur österreichisch-ungarischen Innen- und Aussenpolitik 1885–1912*, Quellen zur Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts, Fritz Fellner, ed., vol. 6, parts 1 and 2 (Graz, 1994).

2 *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der Bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914*, Ludwig Bittner, Heinrich von Srbik, and Hans Uebersberger, eds., 9 vols. *Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs*, vols. 19–27 (Vienna–Leipzig, 1930).

3 On Molden see Solomon Wank, "Desperate Counsel in Vienna in July 1914: Berthold Molden's Unpublished Memorandum," *Central European History* 26/3 (1993): 281–310.

were published in the 1930s,⁴ but these, like all the aforementioned works, were concerned primarily with diplomacy and the Bosnian annexation crisis as a dress rehearsal for the July 1914 crisis.⁵ Wilhelm Carlgren's *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal vor der bosnischen Annexionskrise* (Uppsala, 1955) offered some new information on Aehrenthal's efforts to revive the Three Emperors' Alliance, but it is essentially a diplomatic study written from the point of view of the primacy of foreign policy (*Primat der Aussenpolitik*). Within this conceptual framework, the major factors that influence foreign policy come from without; domestic politics and personality factors are simply treated as givens. F. R. Bridge's recent history of the Habsburg Monarchy's foreign policy reflects these assumptions.⁶ Clearly, Aehrenthal was a case of historiographical neglect that deserved to be remedied.

From my reading of memoirs and articles by Aehrenthal's contemporaries, I received hints that something more far-reaching was involved in his diplomacy. For example, Baron Alexander von Musulin, a high foreign ministry official who was close to Aehrenthal, maintains that the foreign minister's external activity is understandable only for those who see it as a preliminary condition from which later internal consequences were to be drawn.⁷ From such intimations, I formulated a hypothesis that Aehrenthal's foreign policy objectives had an internal component, and went to the HHStA to see whether I could find evidence in the unpublished documents to support that thesis. The supposition was borne out. The unpublished documents revealed that Aehrenthal was one of the few, if not the only, Habsburg diplomat who thought deeply about the monarchy's problems and closely followed internal affairs in his homeland even when posted abroad. His foreign policy objectives, as I discovered, were part of a grand scheme of constitutional reform to make the amorphous organs of the common government created by the Compromise of 1867 a real imperial governing body, to reshape relations between Austria and Hungary and to solve the South Slav problem by creating an autonomous South Slav unit within Hungary.⁸ Aehrenthal's reform program

4 Bernadotte Schmitt, *The Annexation of Bosnia 1908–1909* (Cambridge, 1937) and Momčilo Ninčić, *La crise Bosniaque et les Puissances Européennes*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1937).

5 Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, trans. and edited by I.M. Massey, 3 vols. (London, 1952–1957), 1:300.

6 Francis Roy Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815–1918* (New York 1990), 269–311.

7 Alexander von Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz: Erinnerungen eines österreich-ungarischen Diplomaten* (Munich, 1924), 159. For other similar expressions of the interconnectedness of foreign and internal policy in Aehrenthal's political thought see chapter 2 below.

8 Aehrenthal's scheme will be presented and analyzed in chapters 8 and 11 of volume 2, which is in preparation. In the meantime, see Solomon Wank, "Aehrenthal's Programme for the Constitutional Transformation of the Habsburg Monarchy: Three Secret Mémoires," *Sla-*

never was realized, but not for lack of his trying. The failure of his reform efforts shows the severe limitations placed on all reform efforts by dualism and the neoabsolutist character of the imperial elite and the Habsburg court. The link between Aehrenthal's foreign policy and the Habsburg Monarchy's internal problems, especially the nationalities question, became the theme of my dissertation.

What led Aehrenthal to attempt to reform the Habsburg Empire from his post as foreign minister needs to be seen in the complex context of the dualistic structure of the Habsburg Empire after 1867. The amorphousness of that structure cried out for a unifying force. That role fell to the foreign minister. He was not just another department head but a *de facto*, if not *de jure*, imperial chancellor, even if Aehrenthal was the only foreign minister after 1871 to willingly embrace that dual role.⁹ One of the roots of his running conflict with his predecessor as foreign minister, Count Agenor Gołuchowski, when Aehrenthal was ambassador to Russia was precisely Gołuchowski's unwillingness to assume that role (see chapters 5 and 6 below). The position of the foreign minister is discussed in chapter 7 of Volume 2 of this work, in preparation.

Aehrenthal was highly intelligent and probably the shrewdest inhabitant of the *Ballhausplatz* in the dualist era. He had a good grasp of the monarchy's domestic problems, yet many historians think he committed a serious blunder in annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908.¹⁰ As pointed out earlier, these same historians see the annexation as having led to the July 1914 crisis and the outbreak of the First World War. If it was a blunder, it has to be seen in the complex of factors that led Aehrenthal to annex the two Turkish territories, not least being their importance to his reform plans. The annexation question will be analyzed in chapter 11 of Volume 2. What might be stated here is that his post-annexation policy strongly suggests that had he survived, he probably would have eschewed military force and war, on strictly pragmatic, not principled, grounds, in response to the assassinations of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife. This stance, which earlier sparked his bitter conflict with

onic and East European Review 41/97 (June 1963): 513–536, and Éva Somogyi, "Aehrenthals Reformbestrebungen 1906–1907," *Österreichische Osthefte* 30 (1988): 60–75.

⁹ Count Friedrich Ferdinand Beust, one of the architects of dualism, was the first and last foreign minister to officially also hold the office of imperial chancellor (*Reichskanzler*), which he occupied from 1867 to 1871. See Éva Somogyi, *Der gemeinsame Ministerrat der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie 1867–1906*. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs, vol. 73 (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 1996), 23–26, 33–36, 71–72.

¹⁰ Austro-Hungarian diplomat Baron Julius von Szilassy, who paints a very flattering picture of Aehrenthal in his memoirs as "hardworking," "extremely knowledgeable," "thoughtful," "tactful," and "prudent," then goes on to say, "It still puzzles me to this day how he could be so mistaken in the Bosnian problem." Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie: Diplomatische Erinnerungen* (Berlin, 1921), 127.

the chief of the general staff, General Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, will be elaborated on in chapter 13 and the conclusion in Volume 2 of the biography.

After completing the dissertation, I decided, on the advice of my dissertation adviser, the late Professor Henry L. Roberts, that I would forgo submitting it for publication. We both agreed that it constituted the first half of a political biography. Therefore, I returned to Vienna in 1964–1965 to study documents and private papers in the HHStA pertaining to Aehrenthal's last three years as foreign minister. The decision to cast the biography in a political–diplomatic framework was determined by the absence of evidence related to childhood experiences, family life, and personality formation that would support psychological assumptions that would be more than purely conjectural. That all changed dramatically shortly after my arrival in Vienna.

During the course of his own research on Bohemian economic history, an American friend, Professor Herman Freudenberger, of Tulane University, came across material related to the Aehrenthal family in the Czech state archive in Litoměřice/Leitmeritz. On receiving the news, I lost no time in going there. What I found was a bit overwhelming — one hundred eighty cartons of Aehrenthal family and estate papers that had been moved to the state archive from the Aehrenthal estate at Doksany/Doxan, located northwest of Prague. Five of these cartons were crammed with Aehrenthal's correspondence and personalia such as school reports, photographs, political cartoons, and newspaper clippings.

I was surprised by the discovery of the material because I had asked Count Johann Lexa von Aehrenthal, the foreign minister's son, about the existence of family correspondence. He thought that there might be some, but he had not carefully examined the contents of the family archive and had the impression that it was not extensive. Moreover, he believed that what had existed probably had been destroyed during the expulsion of the Bohemian–Germans after the Second World War. There indeed would have been no family correspondence if Aehrenthal's mother, Baroness Maria Aehrenthal, had carried out her intention in 1906 to burn it. She was dissuaded from doing so by her youngest daughter, Countess Johanna Bylandt-Rheidt: "Please do not burn anything...all the letters and memories are like a book in which the distant past comes alive again before our eyes."¹¹ Historians owe Countess Johanna a posthumous debt of gratitude for saving the family correspondence from going up in flames.¹²

11 SAL, RAA/128, Baroness Marie Aehrenthal to Countess Johanna Bylandt-Rheidt, Gross-Skal, 14 June 1906 (Adlgasser, 2: 906). See also the postscript in *ibid.*, 124, Baroness Marie Aehrenthal to Baroness Paula Aehrenthal (Alois Aehrenthal's wife), Gross-Skal, 19 June 1906 (Adlgasser, 2: 906).

12 A significant portion of the family correspondence has been published in Franz Adlgasser, ed., *Die Aehrenthals: Eine Familie in ihrer Korrespondenz, 1872–1911*, 2 vols. Veröffentlichungen

The largest part of the correspondence consists of 1,610 letters exchanged between Aehrenthal and his parents from 1872 until his father's death in 1898 and his mother's in October 1911, approximately four months before his own death in February 1912. I also found 255 letters exchanged between Aehrenthal and his brothers and sisters and between his wife and his mother. In addition, there was a small amount of political correspondence from the period 1902–1906, when Aehrenthal was Austro-Hungarian ambassador in St. Petersburg. References in the correspondence in Litoměřice/Leitmeritz, as well as letters in the *Nachlass Aehrenthal* in Vienna led to letters by him in other Czech archives. These letters turned out to be Aehrenthal's half of his correspondence with Bohemian aristocrats and political leaders, the other half of which is in Vienna.¹³

Even a hasty reading of some of Aehrenthal's correspondence with his parents convinced me that I had struck an extraordinarily rich vein of information that could provide insights into Aehrenthal's psychological makeup and the motivation behind his policy of action. That conclusion was confirmed in a year-long consultation with Dr. Theodore Barry, a psychiatrist in Philadelphia, paid for by a generous grant from Franklin & Marshall College. In weekly meetings, Dr. Barry and I discussed a sizeable number of letters, which I translated into English, in the context of a rough draft of the early chapters of the biography. The purpose of the discussions was to examine the letters for psychological metaphors, rhetorical patterns, and images that might reveal some of the inner recesses of his personality and the way in which his formative years affected his later politics and structured his relations with other people. Knowledge of Aehrenthal's personal background broadens our understanding of his impact on the monarchy. The results of that psychological exploration form the basis for Chapter 2 of the present work. The new sources also provide material for insights into the education of Habsburg aristocrats and how a child was reared to become a Habsburg patriot. The totality of Aehrenthal's private and official correspondence is probably the richest

der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs, vol. 93 (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 2002). A smaller number of the letters may be found in Ernst Rutkowski, ed., *Briefe und Dokumente zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des böhmisch-mährischen Raumes*, Parts 1 and 2: *Der Verfassungstreue Grossgrundbesitz 1880–1904*. Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, vol. 51 (Munich, 1983, 1991). The two volumes contain documents related to the *Verfassungstreue Grossgrundbesitz* (Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners). The Aehrenthal family was associated politically with this wing of the Nobles' Party, which generally supported the German political parties in Bohemia. The Feudal Conservative wing of the Bohemian nobility favored the Czechs. For more on the two noble political parties see chapters 3, 4, and 6 below.

¹³ Most of these letters have been published in Wank, *Aus dem Nachlass Aehrenthal*.

existing source of domestic and diplomatic history of the period of Emperor Francis Joseph's reign.

The psychological dimension notwithstanding, the biography is not intended as a psycho-historical study in which psychological factors are the primary explanation of behavior. Psychological factors, as used here, complement political, social, economic, diplomatic, and cultural sides of an individual's life rather than reduce them to epiphenomena. Instead, the biography is intended as a multilevel analysis that integrates material from all of these spheres and seeks to illuminate the larger society and political processes in which Aehrenthal was a participant. Among other things, Aehrenthal's life and career offer revealing perspectives on the persistence of aristocratic influence in the authoritarian political systems of Central and Eastern Europe (Mayer thesis),¹⁴ and the use of foreign policy to divert domestic pressures outward into the international arena ("social imperialism").¹⁵ Revealing as well are two themes that run throughout the biography: (1) the "indissoluble connection" between foreign and internal affairs; and (2) the political anxiety of the imperial bureaucratic and aristocratic elites resulting from their awareness of the fragility of the empire's foundations.¹⁶

The first volume takes the narrative analysis of Aehrenthal's life to the eve of his appointment as foreign minister in October 1906. The second volume will focus on his time as foreign minister, from 1906 to 1912. Domestically, the emphasis will be on his attempt to play the role of a *de facto* chancellor, intervention in the negotiations between Austria and Hungary for a new economic compromise, efforts to implement the plan of internal reform, and relations with Emperor Francis Joseph and heir to the throne Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

In the realm of foreign policy, the second volume will stress the position of the foreign minister in the dualistic structure, the personnel of the diplomatic corps and the central office (*Ballhausplatz*) in Vienna, reforms to "modernize" the foreign ministry, diplomatic preparations for launching Aehrenthal's

14 Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York, 1981), 3–15. On the influence specifically of Austrian aristocrats see Solomon Wank, "Aristocrats and Politics in Austria, 1867–1914: A Case of Historiographical Neglect," *East European Quarterly* 26/2 (Summer 1992): 133–148.

15 The thesis of "social imperialism" is associated with Hans-Ulrich Wehler and the *Bielefeld* (University) school of German historiography. See Wehler's seminal article "Bismarck's imperialism, 1862–1890," *Past and Present* 48 (August 1970): 119–155. For a succinct statement of the thesis see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire 1871–1918*, trans. Kim Traynor (Dover, New Hampshire, 1985), 171–176.

16 The quoted words are from an 1885 memorandum, *Die Nationalitäten-Frage in Österreich-Ungarn in ihrer Rückwirkung auf die äussere Politik der Monarchie*. The memorandum was written by foreign minister Count Gustav Kálnoky. See 92 n. 51 below.

policy of action, his ambitious program of economic imperialism in the Balkan peninsula, and the aforementioned opposition to war after 1909 and the clash with General Conrad von Hötzendorf. Volume two will contain a complete bibliography of unpublished and published documents, books and articles used or referred to in both volumes and an index of persons.

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Butler Library of Columbia University. The librarians at these great institutions were invariably patient and helpful. While singing the praises of these renowned libraries, I should not overlook the Shadek-Fackenthal Library at Franklin & Marshall College. For many years, Mary Shelly and her colleagues in the interlibrary loan section went out of their way to obtain esoteric material for my use. I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank them. Last but certainly not least, I am indebted to two Viennese friends, Werner and Ruth Meron, who welcomed me into their home and made sure that I never went hungry and never felt lonely.

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Lancaster, Pennsylvania
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FAMILY AND EARLY YEARS

Baron (after 1909 Count) Alois Leopold Johann Baptist Lexa von Aehrenthal was born on 27 September 1854 in the castle of Gross-Skal/Hrubá Skála, located some fifty kilometers northeast of Prague.¹ The castle, whose Czech name means “rough rock,” still stands. It is situated in the sylvan, craggy region between Jičín/Jičín and Turnau/Turnov, a popular vacation and tourist destination known as the “Bohemian Paradise.” Below the castle lies the charming health resort of Bad Wartenberg/Lázně Sedmihorské. The thermal baths there were owned by the Aehrenthal family until 1945 and leased to various individuals.² As we shall see, “beautiful Gross-Skal,” as Aehrenthal almost invariably refers to it in his letters, had a special meaning for him throughout his life.

Alois, called “Louis” by his family and friends, was the second son and the third of six children born to Baron Johann Friedrich Lexa von Aehrenthal (1817–1898) and his wife, Maria (called Marie by family and friends) Felicitas, née Countess Thun-Hohenstein (1830–1911). On his mother’s side, Alois Aehrenthal was descended from the old nobility. Maria Felicitas belonged to the Benatek-Ronsperg/Benátky-Poběžovice branch of the three Bohemian lines of the distinguished Tyrolean Thun-Hohenstein family, whose noble origins can be traced back in documents to the twelfth century.³ On his father’s side, Aehrenthal was descended from a “young” noble house, which nevertheless was able through its wealth and marital relations to establish a prominent position for itself within the Bohemian aristocracy. “The Aehrenthals,” writes William Godsey, a historian of the Habsburg nobility, “provide an example of a family that, despite its recent patent of nobility, had virtually achieved integration with the court nobility by the beginning of the twentieth century.”⁴

1 The birth date 27 November given by Berthold Molden is wrong. See Berthold Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal: Sechs Jahre äussere Politik Oesterreich-Ungarns* (Stuttgart, 1917), 15. The large number of letters from his parents containing greetings on his birthday confirms the date of 27 September.

2 In 1948, the Communist government of Czechoslovakia confiscated Gross-Skal along with Bad Wartenberg. During the Communist era, Gross-Skal was used as a rest and recuperation home by the trade union ROH (*Revoluční Odborové Hnutí*). Both the castle and baths are now owned by the Orea hotel chain of Prague. For a contemporary description of the region around Gross-Skal, see Josef Pryl, *Führer durch das böhmische Paradies: Turnau, Waldstein, Gross-Skal, Trossberg und Bad Wartenberg samt Umgebung* (Turnau, 1880). I am indebted to Dr. Franz Adlgasser for the information about the ROH.

3 See Jaroslav Thun und Hohenstein, *Beiträge zu unserer Familiengeschichte* (Tetschen/Děčín, 1925), 13, 27. As a child and young man, Aehrenthal often visited his mother’s parents and wrote to her from Benatek. SAL, RAA/122, 30 August 1871, 21 September 1874.

4 William D. Godsey, Jr., *Aristocratic Redoubt: The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office on the*

The founder of the noble Aehrenthal line, Johann Anton Lexa (1733–1824), a burgher of Prague and great-grandfather of Alois, crossed the great social divide separating the unprivileged orders of European society from the nobility in 1790. On the ninth of June in that year, the Habsburg emperor, Leopold II, signed a patent raising Johann Anton into the ranks of the Bohemian nobility with the honorific title “von Aehrenthal.”⁵ The often repeated assertions, unsupported by any documentary evidence, that Johann Anton was born a Jew and that he later converted to Catholicism are false, as attested by information contained in church and land registry records in Czech state archives.⁶ The matter of the alleged Jewish ancestry hardly would be worth mentioning if it were not for the fact that certain of Aehrenthal’s personality traits, motives, and methods have been attributed to “the drop of Jewish blood in his veins.”⁷

According to church records, Johann Anton Lexa was born Jan Antonín Lexa on 8 February 1733 in Kralowitz/Kralovice near Pilsen/Plzeň in western Bohemia and baptized a Catholic.⁸ He was the son of Antonín Lexa, burgher and soap maker of Kralowitz, and Anna Marie, née Štěrbá.⁹ The couple were married in the parish church in Kralowitz on 21 October 1732.¹⁰ Antonín Lexa was born 31 October 1707, the son of Vít Lexa, burgher and soap maker of Příbram/Příbram, and Markéta, née Regla.¹¹ They were married in Příbram on 16 October 1701.¹² In the land registry there is an entry under the date 18 October 1713 in which one Isidor Lexa assumed responsibility for the debt of his brother, Vít Lexa.¹³ Church records show that Isidor Lexa, the son of the deceased Jan Lexa, married Kateřina Popel on 9 February 1710.¹⁴ An entry in the land registry records that Jan Lexa, a burgher of Příbram, purchased

Eve of the First World War. Central European Studies, Charles Ingrao, ed. (West Lafayette, Indiana, 1999), 19.

5 AVA, Adelsarchiv, Fascicle 43, Lexa von Aehrenthal, Adelsdiplom, Johann Anton Lexa von Aehrenthal, 9 June 1790.

6 See Solomon Wank, “A Note on the Genealogy of a Fact: Aehrenthal’s Jewish Ancestry,” *Journal of Modern History* 41/3 (September 1969): 319–326, and Hanns Jäger-Sunstenau, “Minister Aehrenthal und der Semi-Gotha,” *Genealogie* 19 (1970): 47–48.

7 See, for example, Take Jonsescu, *Some Personal Impressions* (New York, 1920), 80. The author was Romanian minister of the interior, 1912–1914. For examples of the explanatory use of Aehrenthal’s reputed Jewish ancestry, see Wank, “A Note on the Genealogy of a Fact.”

8 Státní Archiv Plzeň, Matrika Křestní (Kralovice), vol. (year) 1713, 165, entry 153.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., entry 767.

11 Státní Archiv Praha, Matrika Křestní, M20, 1/3, 99, third entry.

12 Ibid., 292, fifth entry.

13 Ibid., Posemkové Knihy, Příbram–No. 105, 151.

14 Ibid., Matrika Křestní, M20, 1/3, 328, third entry.

a house there on 8 May 1682.¹⁵ Presumably, this Jan Lexa was the father of both Vít and Isidor Lexa. This assumption is strengthened by another entry in the land registry that notes that on 23 February 1709, Isidor Lexa took over the mortgage on a house in Příbram from his mother, Ludmila Lexová, the "widow of the soap maker."¹⁶ An entry under the date 2 May 1690 shows that Ludmila Lexová made payments to the same man from whom Jan Lexa purchased the house and to whom Jan Lexa had made mortgage payments.¹⁷ It seems safe to assume that Ludmila Lexová was the wife of Jan Lexa. There the story of the ancestry of the paternal side of the Aehrenthal family, as far as it can be traced in surviving documents, ends.

From the above genealogical evidence, it seems safe to conclude that from at least the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Aehrenthal's paternal ancestors were small farmers and artisans who lived in and around Příbram. They were Roman Catholics and almost certainly spoke Czech. The adoption by the Aehrenthals of a German identity is not surprising. By the end of the eighteenth century, German had become the language of royal administration, business, and cultivated society. Given the low level of national consciousness in the multinational Habsburg Empire at the time, anyone engaged in a profession or in commerce beyond the local level and certainly all those who received patents of nobility in Bohemia became, to some extent, Germanized in a cultural sense.¹⁸ We can safely speculate that this is what happened in the case of Johann Anton Lexa.

Johann Anton Lexa is a good example of the entrepreneurs who sprang from the social class of small farmers and artisans who, alongside bourgeois and aristocratic entrepreneurs, are now recognized as having played an important role in the transition to modern economic activity.¹⁹ Documents in the Aehrenthal family archive attest Johann Anton's progressive views on agriculture, the introduction of manufacturing, and the abolition of serfdom.²⁰ By 1790, the year of his ennoblement, Johann Anton had gained considerable experience as a tax collector, land registrar, manager of a large public insurance system, and administrator of the estates of several large aristocratic

¹⁵ Ibid., Posemkové Knihy Příbram–No. 105, 151.

¹⁶ Ibid., No. 107, 137. Lexová is the Czech feminine form of Lexa.

¹⁷ Ibid., No. 105, 151.

¹⁸ See in general Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918* (Berkeley, 1974), 174–187.

¹⁹ Heinz Kellenbenz, "Die unternehmerische Betätigung der verschiedenen Stände während des Übergangs zur Neuzeit," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 44 (1957): 1–25.

²⁰ SAL, RAA/1, 2, 12.

landowners.²¹ As a result, Johann Anton enjoyed a great reputation as an economic and financial expert. This reputation was no doubt enhanced by the fact that he also “made a great deal of money by profitable speculations.”²² Grain trading, in which several of Johann Anton’s small-farmer forebears were active, was one of the areas in which he speculated profitably, although his choice of “von Aehrenthal” as a noble predicate probably had as much to do with its euphonious ring as with Johann Anton’s having been a grain merchant. The selection of mellifluous predicates was a common practice among new entrants into the Austrian nobility since the end of the seventeenth century.²³ Perhaps the false notion of Aehrenthal’s Jewish ancestry was helped along by, among other things, the presence of a stereotypically evil Jewish financier named Ehrenthal in Gustav Freytag’s popular anti-Semitic novel *Soll und Haben* (Debit and Credit), first published in 1855, one year after Alois Aehrenthal’s birth.²⁴

On 8 March 1805, Johann Anton Lexa von Aehrenthal was awarded the title of *Ritter* (knight) for his contributions of money and grain during the war against the French.²⁵ Shortly thereafter, on 15 March 1805, Emperor Francis I bestowed on Ritter von Aehrenthal the much coveted Bohemian *Inkolat*, which made the Aehrenthals members of the Bohemian political nation (the Bohemian Estates) with the right to attend the diet in Prague.²⁶ This was the basis for the political activity of the Aehrenthals.

21 See the list of meritorious services (*Verdienste*) in the patent of nobility cited in note 5 above. In the same folder (*ibid.*) see also the testimonial by Prince Christian Waldeck, on whose Bohemian estates Johann Anton Lexa held the important post of chief administrator, or head steward (*Oberadministrator*).

22 In an unsuccessful petition by Johann Anton to be raised to the rank of Baron (*Freiherrenstand*) in 1795 at one-half the usual tax, a court official noted that “it is well known that the petitioner has made a great deal of money by profitable speculations and is a very rich man.” AVA, Adelsarchiv, Lexa von Aehrenthal, Bericht des k[öniglich] Böhmisches Landesguberniums, 25 August 1795. The petition was turned down because Johann Anton’s title of *Ritter* (knight), conferred on him in 1792 by the imperial vicar of the Holy Roman Empire, Elector Karl Theodore of Bavaria, was not transferable to Austria.

23 Jäger-Sunstenau, “Minister Aehrenthal und der Semi-Gotha,” 48.

24 See the discussion of the novel in George Mosse, *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a “Third Force” in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York, 1971), 66–70. There are some virtuous Jewish characters in the novel, but Ehrenthal is the most prominent and symbolizes the forces of urbanism and industrialism undermining rural virtue. See also the articles in note 6 above, which briefly touch on other sources of the falsehood and why Aehrenthal never publicly denied the allegations of Jewish ancestry.

25 AVA, Adelsarchiv, Lexa von Aehrenthal, Ritterstands-Diplom, 8 March 1805.

26 *Ibid.* Before the Thirty Years War, the right to bestow titles of nobility and membership in the Bohemian Estates lay with the Estates. After the revolt and defeat of the Bohemian Estates, that right was taken from them and exercised by the monarch.

Like many successful entrepreneurs of the time, Johann Anton Lexa von Aehrenthal sought to give a lasting foundation to his wealth by investing in land. Between 1793 and 1821, he purchased three estates that became the foundation of the family's wealth. Trpist-Triebel/Trpisty-Třebel, located near Pilsen, was purchased from Count Prosper von Zinzendorf in 1793. In 1804, Johann Anton purchased the estate of Doxan/Doksany, located not far from the Elbe river port city of Leitmeritz/Litoměřice and the fortress of Theresienstadt/Terezín, from Jakob von Wimmer.²⁷

Doxan and the surrounding area was originally a convent founded in 1142 by King Vladislav and his wife, Gertrude, and was associated with the Praemonstratensean order. In 1782, the convent at Doxan, along with other convents and monasteries, was dissolved by decree of Emperor Joseph II and transferred to the state-administered religious fund, from which Wimmer, who had become rich as a supplier of goods to the army, bought it in 1797.²⁸ The convent was turned into a manor house. In the late seventeenth century, the convent had been reconstructed in the Baroque style. In the basement of the chapel, with its beautiful ornate Baroque interior, were ruins of a Romanesque crypt that the Aehrenthals restored in the middle of the nineteenth century, and which then became the family's burial place. In 1821, Johann Anton bought Gross-Skal from the aristocratic Waldstein family.²⁹

After Johann Anton's death, in 1824, the estates were divided, in accordance with his will, among his two sons and a daughter. Johann Baptist (1771–1845) inherited Doxan. Gross-Skal went to his brother, Alois Adalbert (1773–1843), and Trpist-Triebel to his sister, Johanna (1777–1849), the wife of Wenzel von Wiedersperg. Neither Alois Adalbert nor Johanna Wiedersperg left any heirs. Upon Alois Adalbert's death in 1843, Gross-Skal passed into the possession of Johann Baptist. After his death in 1845 and Johanna Wiedersperg's in 1855, all three estates were reunited under the ownership of Johann Baptist's son, Johann Friedrich, the father of the future foreign minister. Johann Friedrich sold Trpist-Triebel in 1874, because it was unprofitable and too distant from his other estates in northern Bohemia.³⁰ No doubt, as Franz Adlgasser assumes, in order to prevent another division of the family's estates, Johann Friedrich's last testament mandated that inheritance would be based

²⁷ Information on the Aehrenthal estates is given in the guide to the Aehrenthal family archive in Josef Krivka, et al., *Státní Archiv v Litoměřicích: Průvodce po Archivních Fondcích*, 2 vols. (Prague: Archivní správa Ministerstva vnitra, 1963), 11, 27. See additional and more accurate information in Adlgasser, 1: 21–22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ See Adlgasser, 1: 20.

on the principle of primogeniture.³¹ That decision, as we shall see, altered the course of Alois Aehrenthal's life.

All of Johann Anton's estates prospered. He greatly expanded the grain fields, and he became an acknowledged expert on fruit trees in addition to grain growing, having introduced orchards on his own estates and stimulated the planting of fruit trees throughout Bohemia.³² His interest in fruit farming remained alive in his descendants, including his great-grandson. Even as an ambassador, Alois Aehrenthal avidly read books on the subject. In 1900, he wrote to his mother from St. Petersburg, "I have set up a small pomological library, and I look forward to fusing theory with practice in Doxan."³³ According to Alois Aehrenthal's son, Count Johann Aehrenthal (1905–1972), his father several times expressed the wish to retire from the diplomatic corps and to devote himself to fruit-growing.³⁴ The expressed wish to retire to a country life reveals a fundamental ambivalence that Aehrenthal experienced in his career. The sources of this ambivalence will be discussed later.³⁵

Under Johann Baptist Anton (1771–1845), Johann Anton's eldest son, the family's prosperity increased considerably, and its prestige grew. Johann Baptist's second wife was Countess Johanna Wilczek (1793–1869), daughter of a very grand family of the pedigreed Bohemian–Silesian aristocracy. Johann Baptist was an innovative manager of his estates and an active member of several private and public patriotic societies dedicated to the stimulation of new ideas and methods in agriculture, commerce, and industry.³⁶ He won renown as an ardent advocate and disseminator of laissez-faire economic ideas.³⁷ His

31 Adlgasser, 1: 21.

32 See the introduction by Josef Křivka in *Aehrenthalský Rodinný Archiv: Inventář* (typescript, Libochovice, 1962). The inventory is available in the state archive in Litoměřice, branch archive in Žitenice.

33 SAL, RAA/125, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 9 September 1900.

34 Count Johann told me this in one of several conversations that I had with him before his death.

35 See chapter 2.

36 See Johann von Aehrenthal, *Deutschlands Kernobstsorten dargestellt in Abbildungen nach der Natur*, 3 vols. (Leitmeritz and Prague, 1833–1842). The full title of the work describes it as having been written "Von einem Wirklichen Mitglied der k. k. patriotisch-ökonomischen Gesellschaft und des pomologischen Vereins im Königreich Böhmen." According to one Czech writer, Johann Baptist "took second place to none in the management of his properties or in making essential changes to improve their productivity." Křivka, *Inventář* (same as n. 32 above), 111.

37 Johann von Aehrenthal, *Die Staatswirtschaft nach Naturgesetzen* (Leipzig, 1819). Bedřich (Friedrich) Mendl refers to Johann Baptist as "one of the best writers on free trade in Bohemia in the nineteenth century." See Mendl, "Česky Průmysl Před Sto Lety a Počátky Průmyslové Jednoty" [Czech Industry One Hundred Years Ago and the Beginning of the Association of Manufacturers] in *Sto Let Jednoty k Povzbuzení Průmyslu v Čechách 1833–1933* [One

grandson Alois stood in the tradition of the Aehrenthal family's support of capitalist economic ideas when, in a letter to his father, in 1879, he wondered whether Bismarck, whose welfare measures to cushion the effects of the economic depression of the time he generally approved, nevertheless was "leaping from the frying pan into the fire" by calling for an all-inclusive system of protective tariffs that would obstruct commerce at a time when technology was facilitating commercial exchange as never before.³⁸ Perhaps, too, we can see a residue of the family's entrepreneurial background in Alois Aehrenthal's ambition and industry.³⁹

Johann Friedrich was a worthy successor to his father, Johann Baptist, as a capable manager of the family's estates. Johann Friedrich completed the transition of the Aehrenthal estates, begun by his father, from feudal to capitalist enterprises. In addition to large-scale agrarian production, dairy farming, and animal breeding (cattle, sheep, and horses), significant agricultural-industrial enterprises were established. For example, a sawmill in Gross-Skal took advantage of the estate's extensive forest area. There was also a brick factory and a brewery. Doxan possessed a large sugar-refining factory that processed sugar beet grown on the estate and beet grown under contract by farmers in the area. Although not as large as the huge latifundia of some of his fellow Bohemian nobles, Gross-Skal's 4,100 hectares and Doxan's 1,400 hectares (a total of 13,590 acres) amounted to holdings of a respectable size, sufficient to sustain an aristocratic way of life.⁴⁰

In keeping with the functionally diverse character of noble life in preindustrial monarchical-aristocratic societies, Johann Baptist, who received a law degree from Charles-Ferdinand University, in Prague,⁴¹ held various administrative and judicial posts in Bohemia, finally attaining the important post of

Hundred Years of the Association for the Encouragement of Industry in Bohemia 1833-1933 (Prague, 1934), 16.

³⁸ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 28 February 1879 (Adlgasser, 1: 147-149).

³⁹ See chapter 2.

⁴⁰ One hectare (ha) equals 2.471 acres. The information on the Aehrenthal estates has been gleaned from the sources cited in notes 27 and 32 above. Following are the sizes of the largest estates of illustrious Bohemian noble families: Schwarzenberg, 176,000 ha; Colloredo, 68,000 ha; Fürstenberg, 40,000 ha; Liechtenstein, 37,000 ha. See Eagle Glassheim, "Between Empire and Nation: The Bohemian Nobility, 1880-1918," in *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, Pieter M. Judson and Marsha Rozenblit, eds. (New York, 2005), 61-88; the statistics are on page 64. In addition to their Bohemian estates, many families possessed large estates in other parts of the monarchy and in Germany (Fürstenberg).

⁴¹ SAL, RAA/20 contains Johann Baptist's law degree. That was the name of the university from the seventeenth century until the founding of the Czech Republic in 1918. At that time the name was changed back to its original name of Charles University.

vice president of the Bohemian *Landrecht* court.⁴² This court, which was abolished after the revolution of 1848, was a feudal vestige having special jurisdiction over nobles, clergy, and corporate bodies such as monasteries. It was the court of first instance in all civil matters involving nobles and their estates.⁴³ Given the centrality of the court to aristocratic interests, it was unusual that a member of a recently ennobled family like the Aehrenthals should be represented on it as vice president. That Johann Baptist held that position attests to the unusually rapid rise of the Aehrenthal family.

As a reward for his distinguished service in the civil administration and the judiciary, his contributions to spreading advanced economic and agronomic knowledge, and his efforts in recruiting and outfitting a militia unit in the war against the French, Johann Baptist was raised to the rank of *Freiherr* (baron) in the Austrian and Bohemian nobility (with bestowal of the *Inkolat* in the latter) by Emperor Francis I in 1828.⁴⁴ As a member of the Bohemian Estates, he was included among the lords of Bohemia in the painting commemorating the coronation — the last one held in Prague — of King Ferdinand IV of Bohemia (I of the Austrian Empire) in 1836, which hung in the castle of Prague (Hradčany).⁴⁵

The secure social position that the Aehrenthal family had attained by the time of Alois's birth in 1854 was enhanced during his lifetime. Two of his sisters married into the prominent landed aristocratic Colloredo-Mannsfeld family.⁴⁶ The marriage of Aehrenthal's third sister to Count Anton Bylandt-Rheidt, an army officer, was socially advantageous, even though Count Anton's family did not belong to the landed aristocracy.⁴⁷ Aehrenthal's father was a leading member of the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners' Party (*Verfassungstreue Grossgrundbesitzerpartei*) in Bohemia, a longtime representative (1867–1883) of the party in the Bohemian diet and, despite the near blindness that overtook him in the early 1880s, chairman of its election committee

42 AVA, Adelsarchiv, Freyherrnstands-Diplom, 10 March 1828.

43 Johann Springer, *Statistik des österreichischen Kaiserstaates*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1848), 11, 110–11. Emperor Joseph II had eliminated special jurisdictions only for criminal cases.

44 AVA, Adelsarchiv, Freyherrnstands-Diplom, 10 March 1828. On Johann Baptist's contributions to the war effort against the French, as well as those of his father, see Anton Ernstberger, *Böhmen's freiwilliger Kriegseinsatz gegen Napoleon 1809* (Munich, 1963), 105, 110, 183–184, 187.

45 I am indebted to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg for directing my attention to the painting. Letter to the author, St. Sylvester's Day (31 December) 1968.

46 See Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 15.

47 Ibid. The Bylandt-Rheidts were a military-bureaucratic noble family. Count Anton's father, Count Arthur Bylandt-Rheidt, was an army general and Austro-Hungarian minister of war (1876–1892). His brother, Count Arthur Bylandt-Rheidt, Jr., served as a cabinet minister in several Austrian governments at the turn of the century, as governor (*Statthalter*) of Upper Austria (1902–1904), and was a member of the Austrian House of Lords since 1900.

in the 1890s.⁴⁸ The political activity of the Aehrenthal family lived on in Alois Aehrenthal's involvement in domestic Austrian and Bohemian politics, even while a member of the Habsburg diplomatic corps. Through his mother, Alois Aehrenthal was related to many of the great noble houses of Bohemia and Austria. Among his boyhood friends were sons of the high aristocracy, such as Count Oswald Thun-Salm,⁴⁹ Count Adolf Ledebour,⁵⁰ Count Rudolf Czernin,⁵¹ and Prince Wilhelm Auersperg.⁵² His own marriage in 1902 to Countess Paula Széchenyi (1871–1945), daughter of an illustrious Hungarian magnate family, was greeted enthusiastically by the bride's father.⁵³

Contrary to the claim by some historians, there is no evidence that the marriage was a strategic move on Aehrenthal's part to gain the support or mute the opposition of the Magyar establishment when, as appeared likely, he would succeed Góhuchowski as foreign minister.⁵⁴ He did not need to marry Countess Paula Széchenyi to forge a tie to the Magyars; he already had one in his cousin, Countess Eleonore Andrassy, née Kaunitz, the wife of Count Géza Andrassy, the nephew of the renowned Hungarian statesman Count Julius Andrassy, Sr.⁵⁵ He also had entrée to the Magyar ruling elite through his close diplomatic colleague Count Ladislaus von Szögyény, longtime Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Berlin (1892–1914), who had extensive experience in the Hungarian political arena as a county official, member of both the upper and lower houses of the Hungarian parliament, and Hungarian minister at the court of Emperor Francis Joseph.⁵⁶ Nor is there evidence that his marriage to a Hungarian noblewoman turned him into a catspaw for the Magyar elite.⁵⁷ Both before and after his marriage, he strenuously opposed Hungarian independence and separatist tendencies.⁵⁸ From the tone of the correspondence between Aehren-

⁴⁸ See Rutkowski, 1: 25 and Adlgasser, 1: 23–24. See also Joseph Maria Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, Joseph Redlich, ed. (London, 1930), 32.

⁴⁹ Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 179.

⁵⁰ SAL/RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 9 April 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 56).

⁵¹ NA/5, Count Rudolf Czernin to Aehrenthal, 30 October 1906. In a letter congratulating Aehrenthal on his appointment as foreign minister, Czernin refers to him as "my oldest boyhood friend."

⁵² SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 9 March 1877. See also Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 15, and Adlgasser, 1: 80, 463.

⁵³ SAL, RAA/125, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 4 June 1902 (Adlgasser, 2: 808).

⁵⁴ Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 251.

⁵⁵ Adlgasser, 1: 29.

⁵⁶ See *Jahrbuch des k.u.k. Auswärtigen Dienstes* (Vienna 1910), 370–371. See also Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 72.

⁵⁷ Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 52, 92–93, and Alfred Francis Pribram, *Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, 1908–1914* (London, 1951), 71.

⁵⁸ On Aehrenthal and the Hungarians, see chapters 4 and 6.

thal and his mother on the one hand and Paula and Maria Aehrenthal on the other, one may conclude that the relationship was a marriage based on mutual love and affection and that it remained so until Aehrenthal's death.⁵⁹ In a letter to his mother announcing his engagement to Paula Széchényi, Aehrenthal wrote, "I know that you have been aware that I [have felt] a serious attraction to my beloved Paula for a long time. Circumstances, for which I am mostly to blame, placed obstacles in the way. Everything has now cleared up."⁶⁰ Aehrenthal does not say what the obstacles were, but financial matters, discussed later, probably was one of them.

Despite the rapid ascent of the family, there is evidence suggesting that the Aehrenthals were slightly sensitive about the humble origins of the paternal side of the family. From 1880, Alois Aehrenthal and his older brother, Felix, several times sought royal approval to drop the family name of Lexa — rarely used since the time of Alois Aehrenthal's father — and to have the more aristocratic-sounding noble title (*Prädikat*) "von Aehrenthal" legally recognized as the family name.⁶¹ All of these requests, including one made at the time Aehrenthal was raised to the rank of count in August 1909, were denied.⁶² It is not clear why Alois Aehrenthal's request was refused when the petitions of many less-distinguished noblemen were successful. Perhaps Archduke Francis Ferdinand's growing hostility to Aehrenthal and the rumors of the latter's Jewish origins played a role, especially with the virulently anti-Semitic archduke.⁶³ There is, it should be said, no indication of a desire to efface the humble origins of the paternal side of the family in Alois's correspondence with his parents or siblings.⁶⁴ Ironically, Emperor Francis Joseph, in his letter to the Austrian minister of the interior, Baron Guido von Haerdtl, informing him of his decision to raise Aehrenthal to the rank of count, leaves out the family name of Lexa, referring to him simply as Count Alois von Aehrenthal, which he refused to allow Aehrenthal to use legally.⁶⁵

59 See the correspondence published in Adlgasser, part 2.

60 RAA, SAL/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 4 June 1902 (Adlgasser, 2: 808).

61 In a conversation with me, Alois Aehrenthal's son, the late Count Johann Aehrenthal (1905–1972), thought that the requests to drop the family name of Lexa might have been motivated by the wish to efface the origins of the paternal side of the family.

62 AVA, Adelsarchiv, Fascicle 43, Lexa von Aehrenthal. See also Wank, "A Note on the Genealogy of a Fact," 325, and William D. Godsey, Jr., "The Nobility, Jewish Assimilation, and the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Service in the Late Imperial Era," *Austrian History Yearbook* 27 (1996): 168.

63 Solomon Wank, "The Archduke and Aehrenthal: The Origins of a Hatred," *Austrian History Yearbook* 33 (2002): 77–104.

64 See the correspondence published in Adlgasser.

65 AVA, Adelsarchiv, Fascicle 43, Emperor Francis Joseph to Baron Guido von Haerdtl, Bad Ischl, 17 August 1909.

The above requests notwithstanding, there was little reason for Alois Aehrenthal to feel personally insecure because of the humble origins of the paternal side of the family and to harbor a wish to efface those origins through his personal success, as some historians claim.⁶⁶ Apart from the residual influence of the entrepreneurial spirit of the family's founder, the psychological well-springs of Aehrenthal's great ambition may be found in his home environment, especially in his relations with his parents.⁶⁷

The picture of Aehrenthal that emerges from his correspondence with his family and friends is that of a self-confident aristocrat with an ingrained sense of caste and social superiority. Only three generations after his great-grandfather, an entrepreneur and financier, was ennobled, Alois Aehrenthal lamented, in a letter to his father, the intention of his aunt, Countess Gabriele Thun, to sell the estate of Rothenhaus/Červený Hrádek in Bohemia to a bourgeois financier:

I know the future owner well. Despite his enormous fortune, he is a pleasant and modest person, but he remains, nevertheless, a financier, and for that reason, it is a thousand pities to allow such a beautiful object [Rothenhaus] to come into his hands.⁶⁸

In the loftiest court circles, it might have been remembered that the Aehrenthals were "homines novi" who lacked the requisite sixteen noble quarterings for admission to the court nobility, i.e., noble parents on both sides back to great-great grandparents.⁶⁹ That might have been the reason why Count Aehrenthal, highly valued by Emperor Francis Joseph as minister of the imperial and royal house and of foreign affairs, did not receive the collar of the Golden Fleece, even though he had the four nobly born grandparents required for membership by the statutes of the Order.⁷⁰ The emperor could, of course,

⁶⁶ See Hans Heilbrunner, "Count Aehrenthal and Russian Jewry, 1903–1907," *Journal of Modern History* 38/4 (December 1966): 394–406.

⁶⁷ See chapter 2.

⁶⁸ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 21 June 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 94). In the end, Rothenhaus was not sold. In 1887, it came into the possession of Prince Georg Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Countess Thun's son from her first marriage to Prince Ludwig Hohenlohe-Langenburg. Her second husband was Count Ladislaus Thun, Maria Aehrenthal's brother. Alois's parents agreed that "it is a great pity that such a very beautiful object [Rothenhaus]" should pass out of the possession of noble ownership. See *ibid.*, 118, Maria Aehrenthal to her husband, Rothenhaus, 12 June 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 94–95).

⁶⁹ Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 49.

⁷⁰ This reason for the denial of the Fleece was suggested by Prince Karl Schwarzenberg in a letter to me (see n. 45 above). William D. Godsey, Jr. kindly provided the information on the membership requirements for the Order.

have made an exception in Aehrenthal's case or awarded him the collar on his deathbed without any harmful consequences for the prestige of the order, but he chose not to do so. The political and personal enmity of Archduke Francis Ferdinand as well as the rumors of Jewish origins, mentioned earlier, also might have played a role here as well.⁷¹

According to Countess Paula Aehrenthal, her husband's boyhood and adolescence in the Bohemian aristocratic social setting of his parents' house were carefree and happy. He enjoyed a warm and close family life with parents who manifested great trust in him.⁷² Aehrenthal's letters to his parents confirm his wife's description of the nurturing family environment. In a letter to his mother from St. Petersburg, where he was serving as a young attaché, he says, "I wish the fall, the time when I plan to arrive at our peaceful, beautiful Gross-Skal, already were here, in order, even if only for a short time...to enjoy our splendid family life and to acquire strength for future times."⁷³ The phrase "our splendid family life" or "our incomparably beautiful family life" occurs again and again in Aehrenthal's letters to his parents over the years. Throughout his life, he remained closely attached to his family, which, as he wrote to his father "is indeed the only and surest bulwark in the storm of life."⁷⁴

While he was close to both of his parents, Aehrenthal's letters to his mother reveal an extremely close relationship between mother and son, which lasted throughout their lives. They died within five months of each other — she in October 1911 and he in February 1912. Aehrenthal attributed many of his personality traits and his diplomatic skill to his mother. Upon his departure from Bucharest in 1898, where he had been an extremely successful envoy, to take up a new post as ambassador to Russia, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother:

In these days it has again become clear to me what I owe you for the interest in everything good and the art of getting along with people and winning them over [that] I have received as a heritage from the good mother whom I, as so often, inwardly embrace in spirit.⁷⁵

⁷¹ See 28, 36 above.

⁷² SAL, RAA/124, Countess Paula Aehrenthal to Berthold Molden, Doxan, August 1915. See also Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 19–20. Molden based his brief section (ibid., 15–21) on Aehrenthal's boyhood, family relations, education, and personality on Countess Aehrenthal's reminiscences of her late husband contained in the above-cited letter and on two additional ones that are deposited in SAL, RAA/124, Countess Paula Aehrenthal to Berthold Molden, Prague, 3 February and 11 April 1917.

⁷³ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, 25 May 1879 (Adlgasser, 1: 155–156).

⁷⁴ Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 7 March 1889 (Adlgasser, 1: 424–425).

⁷⁵ Ibid., 123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 27 February 1899 (Adlgasser, 2: 729–730).

Aehrenthal also attributed his strong sense of Habsburg patriotism to his mother. After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 1908, Alois wrote to her:

I am convinced that in thought and prayer you are with your old son, who is now living through serious times. From you, good mother, I have inherited an invincible belief in the vitality and indispensability of Austria, and this heritage has guided me in the decisions that I recently have made.⁷⁶

His mother's reply is characteristic of the unswerving support and approval which he received from her:

Certainly my thoughts and prayers in the days that have passed are especially with you. You have chosen the right way and once again put your fatherland on its feet, and I am proud that you, as you have said, have inherited my invincible belief in the preservation of Austria that led you to your great decision. You are the right man in the right place ... I carry your last letter with me, and I cannot read it often enough.⁷⁷

The death of his mother in October 1911, at the age of eighty-one, was a severe emotional blow to Aehrenthal. To his older brother, Felix, he wrote, "I am still living as if in a bad dream. It requires effort to grant reality and pull one's thoughts together."⁷⁸ Alois Aehrenthal's late marriage at the age of forty-eight is probably connected to his attachment to his mother, although financial factors, as we shall see, also played a role.⁷⁹

Alois Aehrenthal was a happy and placid child in spite of terrible nearsightedness and anemia, which left him with a weak physical constitution.⁸⁰ The correspondence with his parents contains little that is directly related to evidence of serious health problems. That is to be expected. As a good son who wished to spare his parents from unhappiness, he would not have dwelt on

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 124, Aehrenthal to his mother, Ofen (Budapest), 13 October 1908 (Adlgasser, 2: 942–943). The same passage is quoted in Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 20. He received it from Countess Aehrenthal. SAL, RAA/124, Countess Paula Aehrenthal to Berthold Molden, Doxan, August 1915.

⁷⁷ SAL, RAA/124, Baroness Maria Aehrenthal to Alois Aehrenthal, Doxan, 19 October 1908 (Adlgasser, 2: 943–944).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 151, Aehrenthal to Baron Felix Aehrenthal, Hietzing (Vienna), 20 October 1911 (Adlgasser, 2: 988).

⁷⁹ See chapter 2. Marriage tended to take place among aristocratic males at a later age. A bachelor in his mid-thirties was not unusual. Also, only 55% of diplomats in 1914 were married. See Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 91–92.

⁸⁰ Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 18–19.

the subject in his letters. Furthermore, Johann Friedrich's and Maria Aehrenthal's cup of sorrow was already filled to overflowing by the deaths of two of their daughters in childbirth (Maria in 1881 and Elisabeth in 1890), and by the poor health of their youngest son, Franz.⁸¹ In addition, the evidence of the letters points to denial of consciousness of bad health and to optimism as a screen or as a compensatory reaction to poor health. Matters of health are important for the psychic states of individuals and their behavior. Some suggestions along these lines with regard to Aehrenthal's personality are offered later.⁸² If there is little with regard to serious health problems in the correspondence, it does contain sufficient evidence to conclude that throughout his life Alois Aehrenthal was plagued with problems of health and the challenge of overcoming them. Indeed, the letters contain an unusually large number of references to recurring health problems: eye problems, ear infections, digestive disorders, neuralgic pains, severe inflammation of the mucous membrane, and susceptibility to colds.⁸³ These concerns about his health become significant when seen in the context of his frequent reports about getting out into nature, taking long walks, fencing, playing tennis, going riding, and trying to read without his glasses.⁸⁴ All of these suggest a striving to achieve good health. Both the fragility of his health and his determination to overcome his physical maladies are glimpsed in a letter to his father about an embassy colleague who was granted an extended leave because of bad health: "It is surely a singular fate that after a while almost all diplomats develop a case of nerves; that is connected in any case with our way of life, and I am already determined to fight against this hereditary ailment of my class (*Stand*)."⁸⁵ And fight he did, and successfully. Years later, after his nerves had held up under the enormous strain of the Bosnian annexation crisis, he remarked, with some amount

81 With regard to Marie (b. 1850) and Elisabeth (b. 1858), see two moving letters Aehrenthal wrote on the first anniversary of each sister's death. SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 1 May 1882 and *ibid.*, 123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 24 July 1891 (Adlgasser, 1: 245–247, 481). On Franz (1861–1933) see *ibid.*, 123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bucharest, 16 March 1898.

82 See chapter 2.

83 See, for example, SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 14 December 1885, and *ibid.*, 123, to his mother, Sinaia 17 July 1896; St. Petersburg, 10 January and 21 March 1900, 31 January and 11 March 1901 (Adlgasser, 1: 595; 2: 749, 756, 778–779). Sinaia is a mountain resort 100 km north of Bucharest, near the old Hungarian–Romanian border.

84 *Ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 16 September 1883 (Adlgasser, 1: 276–277; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 21); *ibid.*, 126, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 8 July 1889; and *ibid.* 123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bucharest, 16 April 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 700). See also Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 18.

85 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 12 August 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 224–225; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 3).

of satisfaction no doubt, that "the diplomacy of the foreign ministry is no noble's casino."⁸⁶

As a consequence of his poor physical constitution, Aehrenthal did not tolerate cold weather well, and his many years as a diplomat in Russia exacerbated his health problems. After having been informed by her son, at the end of May 1878, of his appointment as an attaché at the St. Petersburg embassy, his mother wrote to her husband, "The appointment to Petersburg is very unfortunate (*fatal*) but in any case otherwise honorable, and I hope that our good young one will endeavor...to profit there."⁸⁷

Several times during his years of service at the St. Petersburg embassy, Aehrenthal felt "compelled for reasons of health to think of a leave of absence."⁸⁸ But with his characteristic tenacity and ambition, he stuck out the long periods in the harsh northern climate. It was probably with some measure of pride in his own endurance that he assured his father that he, at that time first secretary of the embassy in St. Petersburg, would see what he could do about having a member of the consular corps transferred to a post "more pleasant in climate as in other respects."⁸⁹

Some of the traits that marked Aehrenthal the man — diligence, ambition, well-ordered intelligence, and seriousness — are clearly visible in the boy.⁹⁰ Despite his severe nearsightedness, young Alois was a bright and enthusiastic student. He spent his free time engrossed in books and newspapers to the point where he was considered a bookworm by the rest of the family.⁹¹ However, he was a bookworm who was interested in what was going on around

⁸⁶ Stb/HS, INr. Ia164.779, resumé of Heinrich Friedjung's conversation with Koloman Kánia, the deputy head of the foreign ministry press bureau, dated 28 January 1909 (Friedjung, 2: 190). According to Kánia, Aehrenthal made this remark to Baron Guido von Call, the highest-ranking officer (*Erster Sektionschef*) of the ministry, when asked about special requirements for applicants to the foreign service.

⁸⁷ SAL, RAA/118, Baroness Maria Aehrenthal to her husband, Prague, 2 June 1878 (Adlgasser, 1: 113–114 n. 156).

⁸⁸ See HHStA, AR, Fach 5/Personalien, Carton 5, Aehrenthal to Count Agenor Gołuchowski, St. Petersburg, 4 January 1905. In 1881, Aehrenthal was granted a two-month leave of absence from his attaché's post in St. Petersburg because spending the entire winter in the Russian capital would be bad for his health. Ibid., Carton 4, Count Gustav Kálnoky to Baron Heinrich von Haymerle, XII B, 5 March 1881.

⁸⁹ SAL, RAA/126, Aehrenthal to his father, 5 April 1891 (Adlgasser, 1: 474–475; partially printed in Rutkowski 1: No. 89). Aehrenthal intervened for Franz Jelinek, consul in the Romanian port of Sulina. Jelinek's brother was the manager of the Aehrenthal sugar factory in Doxan.

⁹⁰ These qualities are cited by admirers and critics alike. See, for example, Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 230, and Henry Wickham Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (London, 1913), 227. Steed, the *London Times* correspondent in Vienna, was critical of Aehrenthal's foreign policy.

⁹¹ See also Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 19.

him. In June 1866, the first battles of the Austro-Prussian war took place near Gross-Skal, and young Alois followed their course with great attentiveness.⁹² The same curiosity and desire to obtain knowledge is seen in a letter to his father just after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, in which his older brother, Felix, took part as a young lieutenant. Upon hearing from his father that Felix was heading for home, Alois wrote:

If I were in his place, I would undertake an excursion to Sarajevo and to Mostar and return home by way of Dalmatia. However, if I know Felix, he will not do that, but hasten as quickly as possible to civilized regions.⁹³

In this same spirit, as a young attaché in Russia he eagerly seized on every opportunity to learn Russian and to travel to different parts of the country.⁹⁴ His studiousness and penchant for history are reflected in several extensive memoranda that he wrote at different periods in his career.

As a boy, Alois Aehrenthal possessed some personality traits that were not visible in the public behavior of the diplomat and foreign minister, who was perceived by his contemporaries and by later historians as a somewhat marble figure. Indeed, descriptions of the dour, dispassionate, tight-lipped, strong-willed, aloof, and dutiful foreign minister strike one as resembling more the descriptions of a marble monument than a person. In fact, the young Aehrenthal was a sensitive, empathetic, spontaneous, and emotionally expressive child. From his wife, we learn how much he suffered emotionally as a result of Austria's defeat by Prussia in 1866.⁹⁵ As an eighteen-year-old university student, he could write with passion about the flowers and other vegetation he saw on a vacation trip from Paris to Marseilles in the spring of 1873.⁹⁶ Even as an adult, he could be moved by the piano playing of Anton Rubinstein⁹⁷ and

⁹² Ibid., 15.

⁹³ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 20 October 1878 (Adlgasser, 1: 134–137).

⁹⁴ The evidence supports Hugo Hantsch's claim — in opposition to other writers — that Aehrenthal made serious efforts to learn Russian and acquaint himself with Russian literature. See Hantsch, *Die Geschichte Österreichs*, 2 vols. (Cologne–Graz–Vienna, 1947–1955), 2: 520. In 1909, in a résumé of a conversation that he had with the Bulgarian prime minister, Aehrenthal remarked that the two men spoke in Russian, since it was the only language common to both of them. ÖUA, 2: No. 1647. In a letter to Aehrenthal, the historian Hans Uebersberger refers to the former's good command of the Russian language. NA/5, Uebersberger to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 3 April 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 269).

⁹⁵ Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 15.

⁹⁶ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Nice, 13 April 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 57).

⁹⁷ Ibid., 123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 3 February 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 441–442, partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 67).

Richard Wagner's operas.⁹⁸ His letters to his parents, which served as conduits for the expression of emotions and feeling that gradually were eliminated from his public behavior, bear out Berthold Molden's claim that underneath the hard surface of Aehrenthal's personality lay "a passionate nature," which he knew how to control.⁹⁹ As we shall see later, the repression and sublimation of the passionate sides of his nature contributed significantly to the shaping of the "marmoreal" personality structure of the mature Aehrenthal.¹⁰⁰

Alois Aehrenthal's education followed the pattern common to the aristocracy at that time. He received his early schooling from tutors in his parents' house, and finished elementary school with examinations in prescribed subjects administered by the *k.k. Musterhauptschule* in Prague, where he did well enough to be recommended for promotion "with distinction" (*mit Vorzug*) to the first class of secondary school (*Gymnasium*).¹⁰¹ He spent the years from 1864 until 1868 as a private student (*Privatist*) at the academically acclaimed Kleinseitner (Malostranské) gymnasium in Prague, one of two secondary schools in the city in which German was the language of instruction.¹⁰² The

⁹⁸ Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 17 March 1889 (Adlgasser, 1: 426–427; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 5).

⁹⁹ Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 231.

¹⁰⁰ See chapter 2.

¹⁰¹ That there were house tutors for Aehrenthal and his siblings is evident from several letters of Aehrenthal to his parents about the education of his younger brother in which the house tutor is frequently mentioned. See, for example, SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 12 April 1879. Aehrenthal's report card (*Schul-Zeugnis*) for the year 1863 is deposited in *ibid.*, 124. He did not actually attend classes at the elementary school in Prague, but it provided him with the necessary certification for admission to the gymnasium. On the education of the aristocracy in general, see Hannes Stekl, *Österreichs Aristokratie in Vormärz: Herrschaftsstil und Lebensformen der Fürstenhäuser Liechtenstein und Schwarzenberg* (Vienna, 1973), 103–115. While some changes took place in the pattern of aristocratic education in the second half of the nineteenth century, much of what Stekl describes is still relevant for Aehrenthal's time. See also the highly critical analysis of the Austrian aristocracy in the second half of the nineteenth century by Anonymous (Crown Prince Rudolf), *Der österreichische Adel und sein constitutioneller Beruf: Mahnruf an die aristokratische Jugend. Von einem Österreicher* (Munich, 1878). Engl. trans., "The Austrian Nobility and Its Constitutional Vocation: A Warning to Aristocratic Youth," in Eugene N. Anderson et al., eds., *Europe in the Nineteenth Century: A Documentary Analysis of Conflict and Change*, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, 1961), 2: 78–101, especially 89–91. For a discussion of the archduke's pamphlet see Oscar Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, 1929), 151–153.

¹⁰² SAL, RAA/124. This carton contains Aehrenthal's report cards (*Gymnasial-Zeugnisse*) for 1864–1867. After 1859, the mother tongue of the majority of students became the language of instruction all the way to the *Matura*. The Piarists' gymnasium, a Catholic institution, was the other school in which German was the language of instruction. The top Czech school was the prestigious *Akademisches Gymnasium* in the Old Town. On changes in the language of in-

school also had the distinction of having the highest representation of sons of aristocrats of any of the Prague gymnasia because it was located in the part of Prague called Kleinseite/Malá Strana (the small side), which was adjacent to the Hradschin/Hradčany district, where many nobles had palaces. The school also had a high proportion of sons of military officers and state officials. During the time he studied at the Kleinseitner gymnasium he lived in the Palais Aehrenthal — referred to in his letters as “the old gray house” — situated on the corner of Wenceslas Square (Václavské náměstí) and Štěpánská Street in Prague.¹⁰³ Alois Aehrenthal did not actually attend classes at the school. He studied at home with a teacher, called a *Hofmeister*, who lived in the house, and he went to the school only for examinations. The curriculum (*Studienplan*) of the gymnasium set out clearly what the students had to know.

The school had a traditional classical curriculum (Latin and Greek), which, after the educational reforms of 1848, was augmented by instruction in modern literature, sciences, and mathematics.¹⁰⁴ Aehrenthal's parents probably sent him to a public gymnasium for the same reasons that an increasing number of other aristocratic parents sent their sons, the most important being that their sons had to pass a state examination — the *Matura* — to attend a university. As William Godsey points out, with the advance of knowledge, it became difficult for house tutors to duplicate the range of offerings and the pedagogical techniques found at a gymnasium.¹⁰⁵ For that reason, teachers from the school regularly came to the house to instruct young Alois in their subjects. In addition, Aehrenthal's parents, like other aristocratic parents, probably sent him to a public gymnasium to stimulate his ambition.¹⁰⁶ Aehrenthal later said about his nephew's attending a gymnasium, “It develops young people and forces them to keep up with schoolmates.”¹⁰⁷

struction see Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens: Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, vol. 4: *Von 1848 bis zum Ende der Monarchie* (Vienna, 1986), 295–301. See also Gustav Strakosch-Grassmann, *Geschichte des österreichischen Unterrichtswesens* (Vienna, 1905), 182–185, and Walter Goldinger, “The Nationality Question in Austrian Education,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 3, part 3 (1967): 136–156.

103 The house was sold in 1912 and has since been torn down. The Piarists' school (n. 102 above), located in the New Town district near Wenceslas Square, was much closer to the Aehrenthal residence. Aehrenthal's parents probably chose to send him to the Kleinseitner gymnasium because of the high representation of sons of aristocrats. An added factor might have been that the Aehrenthals were not clerically influenced and did not want to send their son to a Catholic school.

104 See Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, vol. 4, and Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 48–49.

105 Ibid.

106 See Crown Prince Rudolf, “The Austrian Nobility,” 2: 89.

107 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 22 August 1893.

Aehrenthal's existing gymnasium report cards from 1864 to 1867 show that he was a good student. Most of his grades were "very good" (*sehr gut*) or "praiseworthy" (*lobenswerth*), with a few grades of "excellent" (*vorzüglich*), the latter mostly in history and geography. His grades in Latin and Greek fluctuated between praiseworthy and very good. His lowest grades were in mathematics, in which he was usually marked "adequate" (*genügend*). He also received good grades (*lobenswerth* or *sehr gut*) in the Czech language (*Böhmische Sprache*), which he took for three years.¹⁰⁸ In his younger years, when he studied Czech at school and was surrounded by Czech-speaking servants, household staff, and estate workers, his Czech language facility probably was rather good. In 1875–1876, as a law student at Charles-Ferdinand University, in Prague, he took two courses taught in Czech — inheritance law and practice in criminal law.¹⁰⁹ After leaving Bohemia, he was less exposed to Czech, and his facility with the language probably diminished accordingly, but no doubt what he retained proved very useful in learning Russian.

According to an entry in the record of his *Matura* examination, Aehrenthal withdrew from the Kleinseitner gymnasium in 1868.¹¹⁰ Presumably, he returned to Doxan to study for the comprehensive final examination, certainly with a house tutor and perhaps, as in Prague, teachers from the public gymnasium in Leitmeritz, who visited regularly to provide instruction in specialized subjects. He took and passed the examination at the beginning of October 1872.¹¹¹ His scores on the examination show a slight falling off from his earlier academic performance.¹¹² There is no record of his having done the one-year voluntary military service, usually performed by young men after they received the *Matura*. Presumably, he was unable to serve because of his poor vision and weak constitution.

Why Aehrenthal withdrew from the public gymnasium cannot be determined from the correspondence with his parents, although young noblemen generally did not remain at the gymnasium for the full eight years. The reason

¹⁰⁸ The report cards (*Gymnasial-Zeugnisse*) are in SAL, RAA/124. Czech was an obligatory foreign language in Bohemian gymnasia that had German as the language of instruction.

¹⁰⁹ Archiv Univerzity Karlovy, Katalog der Studierenden, Winter Semester 1875–1876 and Summer Semester 1876. I could find no information as to why he took the courses. He may have wanted to improve his Czech, or more likely, there were no parallel courses in German offered in those semesters.

¹¹⁰ His withdrawal from the gymnasium in 1868 is noted on the record of his *Matura* examination. See Archiv hlavního města Prahy (Archive of the Capital City of Prague), Malostranské gymnasium, *Maturitátsprüfungs-Protokolle*, 1870/1–1874/5. Aehrenthal is No. 19 for 1872.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 2 October, to be exact.

¹¹² *Ibid.* He received grades of "excellent" in history and geography; "praiseworthy" in natural history, psychology, and religion; "satisfactory" in Latin, Greek, German, and logic; and "adequate" in mathematics and physics.

most often given for withdrawing the young aristocrats was that the society of students from other social classes was unsuitable for their further socialization.¹¹³ This would hardly seem to apply to Aehrenthal. As a *Privatist*, his social contact with young people from other social classes was minimized by his not actually attending classes. However, a critic of the Austrian aristocracy, Crown Prince Rudolph, maintains that they were withdrawn because the cultivation of the social talents required for life in aristocratic society did not encourage serious application to academic study and led to lackluster academic performance that embarrassed the young aristocrats.¹¹⁴

Whatever the truth of that charge, which is questionable, it certainly was not the case with Aehrenthal.¹¹⁵ As we have seen, he was able to hold his own against his bourgeois classmates in meeting academic demands. However, the intensive family life and social rounds of the aristocracy, as well as the considerable moving about between estates, did cut across the school calendar and may have prompted his parents to return him to house tutors.¹¹⁶ Alois's poor eyesight also may have been a factor, since material to be learned often had to be read aloud to him.¹¹⁷

After receiving his *Matura*, Alois went off to study for two semesters at the University of Bonn, a German university frequently attended by Austrian noblemen who decided to do some of their schooling outside Austria. Bonn was popular because it had a Catholic, as well as a Protestant, theological faculty, and courses taken there counted toward study at Austrian universities.¹¹⁸ He was joined by his older brother, Felix (1853–1918), in January 1873.

The short stay at a foreign university was a modified form of the traditional aristocratic tour (*Kavalierstour*) of various European cities that the sons of noble families made at the end of their education in the parental house. In

113 Crown Prince Rudolf, "The Austrian Nobility," 2: 90.

114 Ibid., 89–90. See also Stekl, *Österreichs Aristokratie im Vormärz*, 106, 110–111, 113, 115.

115 The Crown Prince's excoriation of nobles has itself come under criticism recently for obscuring their involvement in government cabinets, parliament, provincial diets, civil administration, and economic development. See, in general, Lothar Höbelt, "The Discreet Charm of the Old Regime: Review Article," *Austrian History Yearbook* 27 (1996): 289–302. More specifically, see Wank, "Aristocrats and Politics in Austria, 1867–1914." See also the prologue in Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 1–15.

116 The Aehrenthal family customarily spent October to May in Doxan and May to October in Gross-Skal, with periods of residence in Prague during the winter months. On the routine of aristocratic family life see Stekl, *Österreichs Aristokratie im Vormärz*, 128–157, and the editor's introduction in Heinz Siegert, ed., *Adel in Österreich* (Vienna, 1971).

117 See Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 19.

118 See Crown Prince Rudolf, "The Austrian Nobility," 2: 91; James Morgan Hart, *German Universities: A Narrative of Personal Experience* (New York, 1878), 178; and Strakosch-Grassmann, *Geschichte des österreichischen Unterrichtswesens*, 188.

this regard, the time spent by young aristocrats at a foreign university had something of a carefree and frivolous air about it that sometimes led to extreme behavior, such as drunkenness.¹¹⁹ One catches glimpses of the latter in several of Aehrenthal's letters to his parents.¹²⁰ The frivolity was encouraged by ample allowances and by the fact that there were no annual or semiannual examinations in courses apart from the state examinations, which came later. Austrian noblemen — Aehrenthal included — rarely had as their goal the degree of Doctor of Law (*Dr. juris*).¹²¹

Like many young aristocrats, Aehrenthal pursued studies in law and political science, which constituted preparation for the state examinations required for entry into all branches of the civil service, the judiciary, and the diplomatic corps.¹²² The juridical curriculum at both Austrian and German universities at the time Aehrenthal attended had a strong conservative emphasis on historically derived law and rights as opposed to the earlier emphases on natural law. The first state examination, stressing special knowledge of Roman, canonical, and German private law, reinforced the conservative mentality of the Austrian nobility.¹²³

In keeping with his intellectual curiosity and broad interests, Aehrenthal's transcript shows that he attended lectures and seminars outside the law faculty such as "The Workers Question"; "The History of the Nineteenth Century," given by the eminent German National-Liberal historian Heinrich von Sybel; "The History of Europe since 1648" (Sybel); and "National Economy."¹²⁴ Aehrenthal mentions some of these courses in his letters but says nothing further about them.¹²⁵ It may be assumed that he found Sybel's anticlerical, anti-Habsburg, and pro-Hohenzollern point of view distasteful. On the other hand,

119 Hart, *German Universities*, 289.

120 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bonn, 4 November 1872. Aehrenthal tells of a party given by the heavily aristocratic Borussia corps (fraternity), at which many young noblemen, including some Austrians, became very drunk. Another letter reveals that Aehrenthal's older brother, Felix, was forced to leave the University of Bonn because of an incident that occurred when he became "very tipsy" (*stark angeheitert*) at a Borussia party. *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bonn, 14 March 1873, and Felix Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 3 April 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 53, 54–55).

121 Hart, *German Universities*, 289, and Strakosch-Grassmann, *Geschichte des österreichischen Unterrichtswesens*, 188.

122 Crown Prince Rudolf, "The Austrian Nobility," 2: 91.

123 *Ibid.*, 98–99 and Strakosch-Grassmann, *Geschichte des österreichischen Unterrichtswesens*, 188. On the law courses at German universities at the time Aehrenthal attended the University of Bonn, see Johannes Conrad, *The German Universities for the Last Fifty Years*, trans. John Hutchison (Glasgow, 1885), 46, 118.

124 See the *Anmeldungsbuch* deposited in the archives of the University of Bonn, 1872–1873.

125 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Bonn, 6 November 1872, and to his mother, 9 November 1872 (Adlgasser, 1: 44–45).

he probably was attracted to Sybel's antirevolutionary political position, which reflected the absorption into continental European liberalism of the ideas of the great English conservative writer Edmund Burke.¹²⁶ Aehrenthal's openness to current problems is reflected in his letters by references to, among other things, the reaction to Bismarck's proposed anticlerical laws¹²⁷ and the furor occasioned by the "Wagner-Skandal," that is, the political controversy over the construction of the Bayreuth opera house for the performance of Richard Wagner's works.¹²⁸ In several letters, we learn of his efforts to secure good French and English tutors, knowledge of both being necessary for social intercourse.¹²⁹ French, of course, was still the *lingua franca* of diplomacy, although the reference to English indicates that that language was challenging the former as a language of international communication, reflecting England's growing influence as a world power. Several letters written to his mother in French when he was a young attaché in Paris indicate that he learned French fairly well,¹³⁰ and in a letter to his father from St. Petersburg in 1881 he wrote "my little bit of English was very useful" in conversing with the officers of an English naval squadron that was visiting St. Petersburg.¹³¹ That "little bit of English" appears to have expanded over the years. His ability to speak the language probably was one reason he was selected as a member of the retinue that accompanied Archduke Francis Ferdinand on a visit to London in the summer of 1894. In a humorously self-deprecating manner, he wrote to his mother that their English hosts good-naturedly "put up with the fractured language (*Radebrechen*)."¹³² It also allowed Alois and his sister, Johanna, to travel around southern England by themselves in early October 1895. In a letter to her father, Johanna relates how Alois coolly reproved a porter who had not shown him proper respect.¹³³

126 See Hellmut Seier, "Sybel's Vorlesung über Politik und die Kontinuität des 'Staatsbildenden' Liberalismus," *Historische Zeitschrift* 187 (1959): 90-112.

127 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Bonn, 22 January 1873.

128 Ibid., 17 February 1873. See David C. Large, "The Political Background of the Foundation of the Bayreuth Festival, 1876," *Central European History* 11 (June 1978): 162-172.

129 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Bonn, 15 January 1873, and to his mother, 28 January 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 48-49). On both letters the year is mistakenly given as 1872.

130 See, for example, *ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 31 May 1877.

131 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, 6 July 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 219-220; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 6).

132 Ibid., 133, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 6 July 1894 (Adlgasser, 1: 545-546). In an earlier letter, he described Queen Victoria as "physically very shrunken, so that it appears that she walked on her knees; in conversation, however, her face lit up and gave the impression of a significant strength of will." Ibid., London, 1 July 1894 (Adlgasser, 1: 544-545). The official reason for the archduke's trip was to thank Queen Victoria for the friendly reception he received in India during his trip around the world in 1892-1893.

133 Ibid., 126, Johanna Aehrenthal to her father, London, 11 October 1895 (Adlgasser, 1: 570).

Alois Aehrenthal's characteristic seriousness did not prevent him from enjoying some of the pleasures of student life. From his letters to his parents, we can see that Aehrenthal participated in some of the frivolities of his aristocratic friends, but we can also see the beginnings of the self-restraint with regard to pleasure and self-indulgence that was a response to his parents' high expectations. After attending a beer party of Borussia, "the noblest corps [fraternity] in Bonn," whose invitation could not be refused, Alois wrote to his father that "it was really very interesting and instructive to attend once," but that he would not return very soon.¹³⁴ In his case, the assurances that "I am attending classes diligently" was more than just a ritual student phrase.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, a student's life at the University of Bonn was hardly a Spartan existence. A letter to his mother in November 1872, shortly after the opening of the first semester, gives a good description of the leisurely pace of academic life, which was rather typical of the time and place.

Awakening at 7:30 A.M., Alois went off to a lecture in logic given by a Professor Neuhauser. At 9:00 A.M. he ate breakfast, usually in the apartment of one of the three Austrian aristocrats who were his constant companions — the four being referred to in Alois's correspondence as the "quartet."¹³⁶ The other three were Count Robert (Bobi) Althann, Prince Alfred Montenuovo, and Count Georg von Majláth (actually a Hungarian).¹³⁷ The breakfast, consisting of tea, eggs, bread, and butter, was prepared by an Aehrenthal family retainer named Frič (Fritsch), who accompanied Alois to Bonn.¹³⁸ After breakfast, Alois took fencing lessons. From 11:00 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. he attended a lecture on the history of Roman law and institutions delivered by a Professor Stintzing. At one o'clock, he and the rest of the quartet ate dinner at a hotel, for which they paid a fixed monthly price. Dinner was followed by coffee in Alois's apartment, or that of one of his friends. Since he seldom attended an early-afternoon lecture, coffee was followed by a pleasant walk. On some days, as we learn from another letter, he attended Sybel's lectures on nineteenth-century history in the late afternoon between five and six o'clock.¹³⁹

The academic side of Alois Aehrenthal's life at the University of Bonn was further balanced by the varied social life, which not only was a normal part of aristocratic existence but contributed to the ingraining of aristocratic social

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his father, Bonn, 14 November 1872 (Adlgasser, 1: 45).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 28 April 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 58–59).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bonn, 9 November 1872 (Adlgasser, 1: 44–45).

¹³⁷ See Adlgasser 1: 44 n.4.

¹³⁸ Alois Aehrenthal uses the Czech spelling of the servant's name in the letter to his mother, but the German is used more often in subsequent letters.

¹³⁹ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bonn, 28 November 1872 (Adlgasser, 1: 46–47).

forms and social adeptness.¹⁴⁰ He was invited by noble families of the region to dinners and balls. In late November 1872, he and the other members of the quartet attended a court dinner in Koblenz honoring the German empress.¹⁴¹ In January 1873, he was invited to dine with the heir to the title of grand duke of Oldenburg, after which Felix and he went to a ball.¹⁴² His letters carry news of excursions to Cologne and other places as well as attendance at horse races, which were a popular aristocratic social event.¹⁴³ Rounding out his modified version of the *Kavalierstour*, Aehrenthal made a five-week trip between semesters that took him to Paris, Marseilles, Nice, and Milan.¹⁴⁴

His correspondence with his parents during the second semester reveals little about his activities. He remained in Bonn until the beginning of August 1873. He spent the years 1874–1876 in Prague attending lectures in the law faculty of Charles-Ferdinand University and preparing for the state examinations.¹⁴⁵ In July 1875, he passed the first state examination in legal history “with two commendations.”¹⁴⁶ An eye infection in the late fall of 1874 prevented him from taking the examination earlier, as he had planned.¹⁴⁷ In July 1876, he took and passed the second examination in constitutional and administrative law and political economy “with two commendations.”¹⁴⁸ He passed the third state examination in November of the same year “with one commendation.”¹⁴⁹ Shortly thereafter, in January 1877, the twenty-two year old Aehrenthal, a tall young man with a rather large head accentuated by his narrow frame, who characteristically leaned forward as a result of near-sightedness, entered the diplomatic service.¹⁵⁰ His first post was as an unpaid provisional attaché at the embassy in Paris headed by Count Felix Wimpffen.

140 Stekl, *Österreichs Aristokratie im Vormärz*, 110–111.

141 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bonn, 28 November 1872 (Adlgasser, 1: 46–47).

142 Ibid., 28 January 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 48–49).

143 Ibid., 28 November 1872, 25 February 1873, and 14 March 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 46–47, 49–50).

144 Ibid. See letters from 23 March to 28 April 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 54–59).

145 Ibid. See his letters from that time. There are only a few, since he was able to visit his parents often. From the existing records, which are incomplete, it appears that Aehrenthal attended the law faculty intermittently. The records for 1874 are not complete, but existing records show that he was enrolled in the summer semester of 1875, winter semester of 1875/1876, and summer semester of 1876, which was his last at the university. See Archiv Univerzity Karlovy, Katalog der Studierenden, Summer Semester 1875, Winter Semester 1875–1876, Summer Semester 1876. From a letter to his mother, we learn that he was registered as an *ausserordentlicher Hörer* (non-regular student) in the fall of 1874. SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Gross-Skal, 16 August 1875 (Adlgasser, 1: 69–70).

146 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, telegram, Prague, 19 July 1875.

147 Aehrenthal to his mother, 16 August 1875 (same as in n. 145 above).

148 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, telegram, Prague, 29 July 1876.

149 Ibid., 8 November 1876.

150 Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 18.

One year spent in an Austro-Hungarian mission abroad or in the central office in Vienna was required as a form of trial, or *Praxis*, year before an aspirant could take the diplomatic examination. Aehrenthal chose a posting in Paris in order to, among other things, improve his French language ability, since competency in that language was another requirement.¹⁵¹ One of his colleagues at the Paris embassy, with whom he became very friendly, was a slightly older legation secretary named Count Agenor Gołuchowski;¹⁵² the paths of the two Habsburg diplomats would cross again, twenty years later, on decidedly less friendly terms.

The life of a provisional attaché was anything but taxing, leaving ample time for pleasurable social activities, provided that he had a sufficient allowance to afford them. Aehrenthal's parents generously supplied such an allowance and a servant, the same Fritsch who had accompanied Aehrenthal to Bonn. Responding to his mother's request, Aehrenthal described his daily schedule.¹⁵³ Awakening at 9:00 A.M., he ate his first breakfast. On Monday and Thursday, from 9:00 to 11:00 A.M., a French teacher came to his apartment. The other forenoons he spent either doing French exercises or reading and writing letters. At noon he ate his second breakfast (*Gabelfrühstück*), prepared by the concierge. When a new concierge turned out to be a bad cook, Fritsch took over as chef. At 1:00 P.M. he went to the embassy, where he remained until 5:00 P.M. He does not say what he did during those hours in the letter to his mother, but an earlier letter to his father reveals that he spent that time registering incoming documents, learning the embassy's codes, and reading newspapers.¹⁵⁴ He passed the time before dinner taking walks, making visits, or, when the weather was bad, reading. He ate dinner at seven, alternating between eating with two older embassy colleagues at a small restaurant near the Church of the Madeleine and at a diplomats' club.¹⁵⁵ The mostly "elderly gentlemen" who made up the club's members were "not very entertaining,"

¹⁵¹ Aehrenthal took French lessons and corresponded with his mother in French to improve his command of the language, "but for the beginning I ask for your leniency." SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 12 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 80–81). On the requirements for admission to the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic corps, see Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 38–50, and Helmut Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen für die Aussenpolitik der Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1914*, vol. 6: *Die Habsburgermonarchie im System der internationalen Beziehungen*, Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, eds (Vienna 1989), part 1: 96–101.

¹⁵² SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 1 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 79–80).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 27 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 83–84).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 25 January 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 78–79).

¹⁵⁵ His two dining companions were Colonel Othmar Crusiz and Count Joseph Wodzicki. The latter was a legation secretary and the former the military attaché.

but gave the club a "solid and exclusive" cast. Admonished by his mother not to drink or eat too much, he proudly reported that between his second breakfast and dinner not a "morsel" of food had passed his lips. After dinner he went to the theater twice a week, mostly the *Théâtre française*. He spent the other evenings attending soirees, which "abounded" in Paris, and assured his mother that he considered them as "conversation hours."¹⁵⁶ No doubt, he attended the soirees at least as much for the entertainment they provided as for honing his competency in French, but the letters to his mother in French, alluded to earlier, show that his attendance at the high-society receptions did indeed enhance his command of the language.¹⁵⁷

Soirees, embassy receptions, theater, family affairs, entertaining friends from Bohemia, and other social activities were not the only subjects he wrote about. There are references to, among other things, events in Austria, the Russo-Turkish war that began on 24 April 1877, and the attempted *coup d'état* by the monarchist French president, Marshall Patrice MacMahon, on 16 May 1877. Of these, the last is the most interesting and surprising. His response to the attempted *coup* confounds the usual picture of Aehrenthal as an arch conservative, even a reactionary. While he definitely was a conservative, his political stance was flexible and undogmatic, and far from reactionary. He scathingly criticized President MacMahon and the monarchist and clerical political parties involved in the *coup* and praised republican political parties and leaders for their calm and objectivity. His views with regard to the French political scene will be discussed in chapter 3 that traces the development of his political and social outlook.

In the winter and spring of 1877–1878, Aehrenthal was in Vienna on extended leave for the purpose of studying for his diplomatic examination. During that time he was coached two or three times a week by an official of the foreign ministry on the subjects of the examination.¹⁵⁸ The tutoring entailed an honorarium for the coach (*Einpauker*), which was paid by Aehrenthal's father.¹⁵⁹

156 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 27 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 83–84). In another letter to his mother, Aehrenthal mentions that he would heed her warnings about the soirees at the house of Baronesse Löwenthal, the mother-in-law of the French foreign minister Duc de Decazes. Ibid., 12 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 80–81).

157 Aehrenthal described one of the soirees he attended as the "nicest and most entertaining." Ibid., 12 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 80–81).

158 On the examination, see Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen," 96–101. The subjects of the examination were the laws of war, neutrals, the sea and foreign missions; peace treaties; development and consolidation of the European states since the Peace of Westphalia; and knowledge of Austrian state treaties. See also Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 42–46.

159 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 6 February and 4 April 1878 (Adlgasser, 1: 108, 111–112). The sum amounted to 450 florins.

Early in May 1878, Aehrenthal took and passed the examination, which consisted of written and oral parts, in each of which a question was posed that had to be answered in French.¹⁶⁰ From a letter to his father, we learn that the first essay question on the written part was in French and called for a discussion of the difference between the German Empire founded in 1870 and the old Germanic empire.¹⁶¹ We may presume that the latter was judged more favorably than the Prussian-German Empire of the Hohenzollerns created by Bismarck, which expelled the Habsburg Empire from Germany. Aehrenthal says nothing about the other questions on the written part. He took the oral examination on 9 May with, as he informed his mother, "positive results."¹⁶² In fact, the results were markedly more distinguished. In June, Count Julius Andrassy, Sr., the foreign minister, approved Aehrenthal's appointment as an unpaid attaché at the Austro-Hungarian embassy in St. Petersburg, where Baron Ferdinand Langenau was ambassador. The foreign minister based the appointment on Aehrenthal's having passed the diplomatic examination with distinction and the wealth of his father, "which enables him to live in the foreign service according to his social status."¹⁶³ The influence on Aehrenthal's personality of dependence on his father's financial largesse will be discussed in the next chapter. Before leaving to take up his post, the fledgling diplomat had an audience with Emperor Francis Joseph, who "inquired about papa's eye illness."¹⁶⁴ It was the first of many audiences Aehrenthal would have with the emperor. Aehrenthal left Vienna on 17 July and arrived in St. Petersburg two days later to begin what would turn out to be a distinguished career that would lead him to the heights of his profession as minister of the imperial and royal house and of foreign affairs.¹⁶⁵

Ironically, Aehrenthal, who has been described as a "career diplomat par excellence," became a diplomat by accident of birth and not by choice.¹⁶⁶ His

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 2 May 1878. In this letter he informed her that the examination would take place from 4 to 9 May.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 5 May 1878 (Adlgasser, 1: 112). The question in French was; "*L'empire d'Allemagne qu'il a été formé en 1870: La différence de l'ancien empire germanique.*"

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Sierndorf, 12 May 1878. Sierndorf was the estate of his brother-in-law, Count Franz Colloredo-Mannsfeld, near Vienna. In telegrams 118 and 119 respectively to his father and mother, 10 May 1878, he informed them that he had taken the oral examination the day before (*ibid.*).

¹⁶³ HHStA, AR, Fach 4, Carton 5, Aehrenthal Personalia.

¹⁶⁴ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Prague, 14 June 1878.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 16 July 1878, and to his father, St. Petersburg, 21 July 1878 (Adlgasser, 1: 115–117).

¹⁶⁶ Arthur James May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 397. See also George Franckenstein, *Diplomat of Destiny* (New York, 1940), 79. Franckenstein,

letters to his parents show that if he had had a choice, he would have elected the "wholesome country life" of a landed aristocrat, pursuing his avid interest in fruit-growing. However, as the second son, he was excluded from that way of life by his father's decision to adhere to the principle of primogeniture. He chose a diplomatic career from a restricted list of possibilities.¹⁶⁷ An army career was ruled out because of poor vision, and the nonclerical Catholic atmosphere of his parents' house provided no inclination toward a career in the Church. From his remarks about the bourgeois financier who was the potential buyer of his aunt's estate, we may deduce that Aehrenthal, like many aristocrats, did not consider business or finance a suitable career. The internal Austrian civil service was a possibility, but it smacked too much of careerism, and it was too closely attached to narrow class, party, and nationality interests to appeal to Aehrenthal's aristocratic sense of service to the whole, however much in practice he and other aristocrats may have served their own class interests. That left the diplomatic corps, which in its upper reaches was still heavily aristocratic.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the diplomatic corps was close to the throne and, theoretically, represented the interests of the empire as a whole. Aehrenthal therefore chose the diplomatic corps as a suitable career for an aristocrat who was imbued with strong feelings of dynastic loyalty and service to the emperor.¹⁶⁹

the ambassador of the Austrian republic at London after World War I, was a protégé of Aehrenthal's as a young diplomat.

167 On aristocratic attitudes toward choosing a career, see in general Johann Christoph Altmayer-Beck, "Die Träger der staatlichen Macht: Adel, Armee und Bürokratie," in Otto Schulmeister, ed., *Spectrum Austriae* (Vienna, 1957), 254–276, and Siegert, ed., *Adel in Österreich*, 77, 184. See also Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 59–60.

168 Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 16–32.

169 On Aehrenthal's political and social views, see chapter 3 below.

THE FORMATION OF A "MARMOREAL" PERSONALITY

At the time of Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, carried out by Foreign Minister Aehrenthal in October 1908, Joseph Maria Baernreither, the respected Austrian parliamentarian and erstwhile minister of commerce, reflected in his diary on the link between psychology and politics:

Much happens that finds no place in speeches, diplomatic notes and state papers, and much more can be explained only through knowledge of the character of the actors. Therefore, a psychological analysis of the character and even of the hidden feelings of the statesman as expressed in the action he takes at certain stages of his political career, often afford the key to right judgment. What determines is not external circumstance only, but the individual temper, education and personal experiences. These are the forces through which he works in given circumstances. They are also a measure of his capacity to receive impressions and the degree to which his point of view is free or rigid. In judging Aehrenthal this is especially true.¹

What Baernreither, who knew Aehrenthal well, goes on to say about the psychological wellsprings of Aehrenthal's policies as foreign minister, is, however, disappointing. To be sure, there are suggestive observations on the influence on Aehrenthal of his parents' strong Habsburg patriotism, their "immovable" German standpoint, and Aehrenthal's closeness to his mother, as well as on Aehrenthal's "great passion" to revive the prestige of the Habsburg Monarchy and his inability "to put up with men of any independence of mind."² These insights, however, do not penetrate very far below the surface of conscious motivation. With the aid of Aehrenthal's correspondence with his parents, which became available only after 1945, long after Baernreither's death in 1925, it is possible to probe more deeply than he did into Aehrenthal's personality.

The contents of Aehrenthal's letters to his parents contain too much that is personal for them to be dismissed as merely ritualistic letters in the style of the time. From them, we may conclude that from the time Aehrenthal entered the diplomatic corps, there began a process of personality transformation. In and through that process, Aehrenthal changed from the sensitive, vulnerable, and emotional adolescent to the dispassionate, strong-willed, and aloof diplomat and foreign minister who, as mentioned earlier, appeared to be more a marble monument than a person. The data in the letters are not sufficient to specify exactly when and how the change took place, but they are sufficient

1 Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 32.

2 *Ibid.*, 32, 38, 234.

enough to provide some insight into the process, which seems to have gathered force about the time he arrived in St. Petersburg in July 1878.

As one might suspect from a long correspondence carried on with such regularity, Alois Aehrenthal was heavily dependent on his parents emotionally and felt a strong need for their continual approval. A lapse of more than a week in receiving a letter from one of his parents was enough to cause him emotional pain. The letters offer adequate evidence that a central conflict in Aehrenthal's life was that between dependence and independence. The way in which he handled this typical conflict of youth and adolescence offers considerable insight into the personality of the mature Aehrenthal. It is not too much to say that the personality of Aehrenthal the diplomat and foreign minister was forged, in part, in the fires of separation from the rural, familial, maternal life in which he flourished as a child and adolescent and in the need to adapt to his "involuntary exile" after entering the diplomatic service. As late as 1900, when he was forty-six years old, his letters contain expressions of the continuing pain of separation. In February of that year he wrote to his mother from St. Petersburg, where he was then ambassador:

I dwell constantly in my thoughts with all of you and yearn terribly for a peaceful, pleasant life near to those whom one holds dearest and very far from the storm of the so-called great world. You already know of my fancy for a wholesome country life! Unfortunately one usually wishes most strongly for that which is most difficult to obtain.³

Even more poignant is a letter to his mother in the fall of 1900:

Sometimes I have a real yearning for the forests and rocky crags of Gross-Skal. It is the beautiful youthful impressions that most strongly influence the soul. Often the call of a jackdaw flying high above, transplants my thoughts to the beautiful, open country that has become so dear to us. The diplomatic career has its strong drawbacks; one lives really as in involuntary exile.⁴

Alois Aehrenthal took with him from the parental home a very strong set of values and a conscience that constantly fed into his mind parental approval or disapproval for what he did. The dependent side of his relationship with his parents is seen in his efforts to please them in order to win their approval. This was not an easy task. They had high expectations, which they made clear

3 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 25 February 1900 (Adlgasser, 1: 755 n. 1557).

4 Ibid., 15 September 1900.

to him, as seen from a letter to his father shortly after he arrived at his first diplomatic post in Paris: "Be assured, dear father, that I will constantly strive to follow your good and well-meant advice, and that I will always keep in mind the aim of achieving a position in life as much as possible through my own energies."⁵ Just how high these expectations were is seen in Maria Aehrenthal's last letter to her son. At the time, Foreign Minister Aehrenthal, under attack by political foes and suffering from an acute case of leukemia, was on sick leave. After reading newspaper reports maintaining that Aehrenthal's sickness and leave really were covers for his eventual resignation,⁶ Maria Aehrenthal wrote, "No, my child, you must not give up your office, and you will not do it; you are still very necessary for our poor Austria, and, God willing, you will recover your health and perform salutary services for your emperor and the whole monarchy."⁷ Aehrenthal's wish to be a good son and the highly developed sense of duty related to that wish can be seen in his repeated assurances to his parents. Shortly before going off to study at the University of Bonn, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother, "I will endeavor to become something respectable in order, dear parents, to make you happy."⁸ In a letter to his father from Paris in 1877, Alois wrote that "it is my most ardent wish to be a worthy son to you in order to give you happiness."⁹ The deeper roots of Alois Aehrenthal's ambition lay in his continuing emotional dependency on home and family, and efforts to ensure parental approval. If Aehrenthal was able to operate coolly as a diplomat, it was in part because the tension in his private life resulting from the separation from his parents was minimized by the constant approval he received in fulfilling their expectations. Aehrenthal's emotional dependency on his parents was strengthened by his financial dependency on them. As pointed out in the previous chapter, Johann Friedrich had prescribed the principle of primogeniture in his will.¹⁰ As the second son, Aehrenthal had no rights in the inheritance of the family estates. This practical dependency was exacerbated during his early years in the diplomatic corps. In accordance with the aristocratic concept that young noblemen aspiring to careers in the civil service and diplomatic corps were expected to educate themselves and acquire experience at their own expense, fledgling diplomats received no annual salary for several years — six to eight on average.¹¹ This

⁵ *Ibid.*, 122, Paris, 12 August 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 99–100).

⁶ Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 230.

⁷ SAL, RAA/125, Baroness Marie Aehrenthal to Alois Aehrenthal, Prague, 30 April 1911.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Prague, 26 September 1872.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 9 March 1877.

¹⁰ See 31–32 above.

¹¹ On the length of unpaid service time see Aehrenthal's letter to his father cited in n. 14 below. Franz Adlgasser gives six years as the average. Adlgasser, 1: 31. See also Godsey, *Aristocratic*

meant that Alois Aehrenthal had to depend on a guaranteed annual allowance of at least 4,000 florins from his father at a time when the income from the family's estates was declining as a result of the economic depression that began in 1873 and lasted intermittently until the mid 1890s.¹² These problems are reflected in many of Aehrenthal's letters to his parents. Noting the downward trend in the price of sugar — the production of sugar from sugar beet was a major economic enterprise on the Doxan estate — Alois lamented to his mother, "I am following the decline in the price of sugar — a new worry for the good father."¹³ Such prolonged dependency on their fathers strengthened parental control aroused both ambivalence and tension in young aristocrats, especially younger sons, leading to self-abnegation and muted efforts at independence. While we can see this pattern in Aehrenthal's relation with his father, his efforts at independence were complemented, paradoxically, by a sense of self-worth and marked self-assertiveness. Ten months after entering the diplomatic service, Aehrenthal informed his father of his decision to resign and seek a career in the internal civil service. As one of two reasons, he cited the financial situation:

I have *no prospect* of receiving a paid attaché's post for *eight or nine* years. Since I was not able in my first year to make ends meet with a very considerable allowance...I do not want to and I may not...impose any further financial sacrifices on you in the future.¹⁴

It was "extremely painful" for him to ask for a supplemental allowance, and he saw no way "to put my household in order" while remaining in the diplomatic service.¹⁵ In January 1880, he turned down the offer of an attaché's

Redoubt, 60, and Allmayer-Beck, "Die Träger der staatlichen Macht," 254–256, 260. See also the financial requirements for entering the diplomatic corps contained in the *Jahrbuch des k. u. k. Auswärtigen Dienstes*, which was published annually (since 1896) by the Austro-Hungarian foreign office.

12 On the financial requirement see Godsey and Adlgasser as cited in n. 11 above. On the economic downturn see Herbert Matis, *Österreichs Wirtschaft 1848–1913: Konjunkturelle Dynamik und gesellschaftlicher Wandel im Zeitalter Franz Josefs I.* (Berlin, 1972), 189, 427, 439, and Jaroslav Puřs, "The Industrial Revolution in the Czech Lands," *Historica* 2 (Prague, 1960): 221–229.

13 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 2 November 1886 (Adlgasser, 1: 362). See also *ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 20 October 1878 (Adlgasser, 1: 134–136) and 7 December 1880.

14 *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 5 October 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 104–106). The emphasis is in the original.

15 *Ibid.*

post in London, "One of the most expensive places in Europe."¹⁶ And in June of the same year, he requested a transfer from St. Petersburg, partly because of "the high cost of living here."¹⁷ Since Alois's behavior and attitudes by and large accorded with his father's expectations, Johann Friedrich gave his son the financial support needed. Each act of generosity on his father's part was an additional spur to Alois's desire to succeed. In 1881, he began to receive an annual allowance for expenses (*Adjutum*) of 1,000 florins from the foreign ministry, thus pleasing his parents and, although it was not a real salary, somewhat assuaging the unpleasant feelings aroused by his financial dependence on them: "How happy I am that I have succeeded to a modest degree in obtaining the recognition and satisfaction of my innermost beloved parents."¹⁸

However, the pain associated with economic dependency was never wholly eliminated. Even after he received an annual salary, his dependency continued, because diplomatic salaries were never high enough to cover the costs of the essentially aristocratic lifestyle diplomats were expected to live at major posts. Aehrenthal wrote to his father about a colleague in the St. Petersburg embassy who was forced to live a very withdrawn life "because he is dependent on his salary."¹⁹ Even as a highly regarded thirty-five-year-old legation secretary and acting head of the embassy in St. Petersburg, Aehrenthal was compelled by financial needs to write to his father in self-abnegation:

I can only cite my carelessness as the chief cause of my debts. The costliness of living here is cited only as a partial explanation and apology. I have lived above my means, and this knowledge pains me even more as I am forced by this stupidity to ask for your help, knowing full well that because of the unfavorable economic situation, your economic situation is not in the most brilliant state.... I beg your forgiveness, dear father, for giving you this new worry. My most zealous effort was always directed toward giving you happiness, and I give you such a sad result, of which I am deeply ashamed!!!²⁰

His consolation was that his work at the embassy allowed him to assume "that in the not too distant future I will receive an independent post which would

16 *Ibid.*, St. Petersburg, 21 January 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 169–171).

17 *Ibid.*, 7 June 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 181–183; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 3).

18 *Ibid.*, 21 June 1882. The *Adjutum* "partially solved the financial question according to my wishes." *Ibid.*, 19 June 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 217–219).

19 *Ibid.*, 28 February 1879 (Adlgasser, 1: 147–149).

20 *Ibid.*, 123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 19 February 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 511–512).

make it relatively easier to regulate my financial difficulties."²¹ As he advanced in rank and salary, he became relatively more financially independent; that is, he was able to maintain a lifestyle and an establishment appropriate to his social status as an aristocrat and Habsburg envoy without requesting extra funds to cover expenses exceeding his income. That lifestyle, however, was still predicated on the continuation of the annual allowance or an inheritance after his father's death.²² He apologetically wrote to his mother, after his appointment to his first independent post as minister (*Gesandter*) to Romania in 1895, "I must burden you again ..."²³ His parents bore a large share of the costs of outfitting the legation *Palais* in Bucharest with furniture, table linen, silverware, and other appurtenances.²⁴

Financial considerations played a role in his late marriage. Aehrenthal could not consider marriage until he had achieved something in life. Four years after his own marriage at the age of forty-eight, Aehrenthal, by then a highly regarded ambassador at St. Petersburg, wrote disapprovingly to his mother about the impending marriage of an aristocratic acquaintance: "He, 49 years old, without money and without having achieved anything in life ..."²⁵ Aehrenthal's very strong and intense feelings of dependency triggered equally strong and intense strivings for independence, which were reflected in his assertiveness and determination to achieve success. The continued parental approval that those strivings — always in accordance with his parents' expectations — earned for him reduced the tension associated with the conflict between dependence and independence and allowed him to operate coolly and with minimal personal anxiety for a good part of his public life.

As an adolescent striving for independence, he put parental trust to the test by acts of self-assertion. For example, at the end of his first semester at the University of Bonn, Aehrenthal informed his father of his desire to make a trip to Paris during the vacation between semesters. He wrote as follows:

If you approve, I would be happy above all over the trust in me that you would thereby show, and insofar as I desire the latter [trust] very much, I cannot refrain from mentioning that, as far as I am aware, you have not been disappointed in the trust which you have already bestowed on me when I traveled here quite alone. You can believe me, dear father, I would really prefer to travel to Prague to be with you.

21 Ibid.

22 On Aehrenthal's inheritance from his father see AVA, Adelsarchiv, Fascicle 43, Lexa von Aehrenthal.

23 SAL, RAA/132, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 6 September 1895 (Adlgasser, 1: 566-567).

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., 124, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 13 February 1906.

but I believe that the trip would be very useful to me with regard to the independence in traveling that I will acquire through it.²⁶

His assertiveness also took the form of a high opinion of his capabilities. In the letter from Paris in October 1877 in which he announced his intention to give up a diplomatic career, he gave as one of the chief reasons, "My remaining in the diplomatic corps will sentence me for years to a trifling intellectual activity, while I feel — I believe that I can say this without having an overweening opinion of myself — that I am fitted for more demanding work."²⁷ This psychologically rooted sense of superiority based on what appears to have been a first-rate mentality contributed to his later being perceived as arrogant.²⁸

Aehrenthal's thrusts toward independence also can be seen in his assumption of the role of the de facto eldest son of the Aehrenthal household. "He always directed us, even from Petersburg," Maria Aehrenthal is reported to have said.²⁹ Relations between Johann Friedrich and his real eldest son, Felix, were bad for many years because Felix inclined toward the more convivial aspects of aristocratic life, such as gambling, hunting, drinking, and sport, all of which went against parental expectations and led to Felix's incurring rather large debts.³⁰ Alois filled the role of eldest son willingly and well; it allowed him to gratify his need to be independent in a way that did not challenge parental authority. A letter to his mother regarding Felix is typical of the way he played that role:

I am convinced that only if Felix receives a *responsible* position will it be possible for him, at his age and with his character, to change his course. Forgive me, dearest mother, for having dwelled for so long on this unhappy subject, but there are times when one must frankly state what is on one's mind while there is still time to take steps against the recurrence of grievous symptoms.³¹

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his father, Bonn, 3 March 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 50–51).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Paris, 5 October 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 104–106).

²⁸ See Hugo Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold: Grandseigneur und Staatsmann*, 2 vols. (Graz–Vienna–Cologne, 1963), 1: 32, and Count Albert Mensdorff's perceptions of Aehrenthal on 64 below.

²⁹ Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 20.

³⁰ See SAL, RAA/151, Alois Aehrenthal to Felix Aehrenthal, St. Petersburg, 10 July 1882, and *ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 23 July 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 250–253). Felix was forced to leave the University of Bonn because of drunkenness. See *ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bonn, 14 March 1873, and Felix Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 3 April 1873 (Adlgasser, 1: 54–55).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 23 July 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 251–253).

Concerning Felix's debts, Aehrenthal, motivated perhaps in part by his own sense of financial indebtedness, wrote to his father, urging him to give Felix the money to pay them off.³²

In addition to counseling his parents on how to deal with Felix, Alois advised them on the education of his scholastically dull younger brother, Franz,³³ on the court paid to his younger sister (Elisabeth) by her deceased sister's (Maria's) husband Count Franz Colleredo-Mannsfeld,³⁴ on the marriage of his youngest sister, Johanna (1869–1943),³⁵ and on what to do about a spendthrift maternal uncle.³⁶ He offered his father advice on the operation of the agrarian and industrial enterprises located on the Aehrenthal estates³⁷ and frankly stated his own views on Bohemian politics while admonishing his father on the shortcomings of his political course.³⁸ To his younger brothers and sisters, with whom he got along very well he was more of a parent than a sibling.³⁹

Aehrenthal's push toward independence, which buttressed a strong sense of integrity, manifested itself in his professional life in his willingness "to describe the situation as it is and not as one wishes it to be."⁴⁰ In 1904, after submitting his resignation as ambassador to Russia because of sharp differ-

32 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 9 June 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 249–251).

33 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 16 October 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 202–203).

34 Ibid., Vienna, 26 April 1884 (Adlgasser, 1: 285–286).

35 Aehrenthal persuaded his father to withdraw his objections to Johanna's marriage to Count Anton Bylandt-Rhiedt. The objections appear to have been mainly financial, i.e., whether Bylandt, a regular army officer, would be able to support Johanna in proper aristocratic style. Bylandt came from a family that owned no estates, therefore, he depended for his income on his meager salary as an army officer. See *ibid.*, 123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 23 March, Baroness Marie Aehrenthal to Alois, Prague, 26 March, and Baroness Johanna Aehrenthal to Alois, Prague 28 March 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 641–645). On the Bylandt-Rhiedt family see 34, n. 47.

36 See, among others, *ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 23 September 1881, and Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 15 October 1884.

37 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 24 October 1878 and 7 December 1880. The latter is one of a series of letters on the necessity of getting a railroad line to Doxan in order to eliminate the costly and inefficient transport of sugar by oxcart.

38 See chapters 3 and 4 below.

39 See SAL, RAA/151, Aehrenthal to Felix Aehrenthal, St. Petersburg, 10 July 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 250). A passage from this letter is typical of Aehrenthal's relationship with his siblings: "Like you, I have not given up the hope that your discussions with Papa over a certain affair will reach a satisfactory conclusion. With a father like ours, who is so kind and generous, it truthfully cannot be difficult to speak out. ... I am also convinced that the matter in the meanwhile will be straightened out and I permit myself to repeat only one further requirement: that is ... that now a *tabula rasa* with everything be made and that you do not remain silent about anything. Do not think ill of me for my insistence on this point. You can be convinced that it is sincerely meant and I do it primarily in your interest."

40 Ibid., 123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 8 March 1896 (Adlgasser, 2: 596–597).

ences of opinion with Foreign Minister Gólurowski on Hungarian political matters,⁴¹ Aehrenthal wrote to his mother:

Gólurowski makes one concession after another [to the Hungarians] at the expense of the unity of the monarchy. He has sent me instructions which have brought about for me a conflict of conscience. Well and good, I can no longer go along with this muddling policy. I prefer to give up my position rather than serve a misguided policy against my conviction.⁴²

From his mother came support and approval: "I knew that my mother would agree that her old son acted according to his conviction. Self-respect is still worth something!"⁴³ The emperor, as Maria Aehrenthal shrewdly predicted, refused to accept the resignation,⁴⁴ but Aehrenthal, the dutiful son of his father, could bow to the royal decision as a loyal servant of the imperial father. Politically, Aehrenthal's strivings for independence were reflected in his determination as foreign minister to pursue an *independent* foreign policy, especially vis-à-vis Germany, that would show "that Austria alone has the strength to achieve its rights in the world."⁴⁵

While other factors contributed to the formation of Aehrenthal's personality, it is difficult to exaggerate the influence of the conflict between dependence and independence. Any actual or perceived infringement on his independence within his professional sphere stimulated inner tension and unpleasant feelings to which, in part, may be traced the irritability and prickliness noted by several people who dealt with him.⁴⁶ Count (1914 Prince) Karl Wedel, the Ger-

⁴¹ Ibid., 126, Aehrenthal to Gólurowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 10 March 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 240). The submission of his resignation was sparked by a dispute over the way in which a treaty should be signed, which Aehrenthal saw as a concession to the Hungarians that would weaken the image of the monarchy as a unified entity in international affairs. See chapter 6 below and Solomon Wank, "Varieties of Political Despair: Three Exchanges between Aehrenthal and Gólurowski, 1898–1906," in Stanley B. Winters and Joseph Held, eds., *Intellectual and Social Developments in the Habsburg Empire from Maria Theresa to World War I: Essays Dedicated to Robert A. Kann* (Boulder, Colorado, 1975), 214–221.

⁴² SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 26 March 1904 (Adlgasser, 2: 851–852). The emphasis is in the original.

⁴³ Ibid., 2 April 1904 (Adlgasser, 2: 854). His older brother, Felix, also wrote to him "approvingly" (ibid.).

⁴⁴ Ibid., 126, Gólurowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl., Vienna, 30 March 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 243). For Maria Aehrenthal's prediction see ibid., 124, Baroness Maria Aehrenthal to Alois Aehrenthal, Prague, 29 March 1904 (Adlgasser, 2: 853).

⁴⁵ Josef Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs: Das politische Tagebuch Josef Redlichs*, Fritz Fellner, ed., 2 vols. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs, vols. 39–40 (Graz–Cologne, 1953–1954), 1: 98, 7 August 1911.

⁴⁶ Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 1: 32, and Ernst von Plener, *Erinnerungen*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1911–1921), 3: 321.

man ambassador at Vienna (1902–1907), said one time, "One can certainly count on Aehrenthal if one deals with him openly and loyally and avoids any tendency towards tutelage."⁴⁷ Aehrenthal's emotional investment in acting independently inclined him toward rigidity in conflictual situations, which served to sharpen disagreements with others as, for example, his famous conflict with Foreign Minister Count Agenor Gołuchowski, as well as those with Archduke Francis Ferdinand,⁴⁸ chief of the general staff Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf,⁴⁹ and Count Heinrich Lützow, Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Italy (1904–1910).⁵⁰ In 1908, Count Albert Mensdorff, Austro-Hungarian ambassador to London, noted in his diary, "Aehrenthal, with all of his good qualities, lacks flexibility (*manque de souplesse*), is pedagogical and dogmatic. He lacks the ability to act gently."⁵¹ Previously, he had noted that "Aehrenthal is stubborn."⁵² Although slightly exaggerated, perhaps because of disagreements over policy toward England,⁵³ Mensdorff's description reflects some of the consequences of Aehrenthal's touchiness about his independence.

When and how the transition from the adolescent Aehrenthal to the "marmoreal" Aehrenthal took place may be traced in its general outlines from his correspondence with his parents. His letters to his parents during his early years abroad, especially those from St. Petersburg, contain evidence of intense personal anxiety at the separation from the emotional supports and security of home and family. Aehrenthal keeps referring to the fact that he wished to go home, and he had a deeply felt need to communicate with his parents, to "wholly transport my thoughts to Gross-Skal at least twice a week...in order [that we might] exchange expressions and feelings with one another."⁵⁴ The letters show manifestations of stress and separation anxiety leading to melan-

47 KA, Nachlass Steinitz, typewritten memoirs, 176.

48 See Wank, "The Archduke and Aehrenthal." The conflict between Francis Ferdinand and Aehrenthal will be treated fully in volume 2 of this biography.

49 See Lawrence Sondhaus, *Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf: Architect of the Apocalypse*. Studies in Central European Histories (Boston, 2000), 85–89, 94–97, 110–117, and Solomon Wank, "Political versus Military Thinking in Austria-Hungary, 1908–1912," *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 7/1&2 (Winter 1981): 1–17. The Aehrenthal–Conrad clash will also be treated fully in volume 2 of this biography.

50 See Count Heinrich von Lützow, *Im diplomatischen Dienst der k.u.k. Monarchie*, Peter Hohenbalken, ed. (Vienna–Munich, 1971), 135–171.

51 HHStA, NMe, diary entry, 15 August 1908.

52 Ibid., 11 October 1907.

53 See Francis R. Bridge, *Great Britain and Austria–Hungary 1906–1914: A Diplomatic History*. London School of Economic and Political Science Research Monographs (London, 1972), 21. Most of the unflattering descriptions of Aehrenthal by Austro-Hungarian diplomats came after policy differences with him while he was foreign minister.

54 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 6 July 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 219–220).

choly, loneliness, and depressive tendencies. All of these are measures of his dependence. In a letter to his mother in May 1879, he expressed feelings that characterized his mood during those years:

The consciousness of having to be so far from the parental house in my most beautiful years often is very painful to me. However, I console myself with the thought that during my periods of leave I can and will make up for the loss, and I console myself further that with my character and considering the profession I have chosen, a change would only be for the worse. You know your son too well not to believe him when he says that he thinks happily and often and with pride of his dear parents and the prevailing family relations that exist in their house.⁵⁵

Aehrenthal's intense feelings of loneliness and isolation seem to have been relieved somewhat after his marriage to the much younger and "lively" Countess Paula Széchényi in 1902.⁵⁶ She gave him the same kind of support he received from his parents, especially his mother, and imbued his "otherwise serious and taciturn personality [with] more cheerfulness and warmth."⁵⁷ During the height of the diplomatic furor stirred up by his announcement of the Sanjak of Novibazar railroad project, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother, "As always in difficult times, my wife and my children are my consolation and diversion."⁵⁸

Had he not clamped down on what apparently were withering impulses and feelings, as his letters indicate he did, it is likely that he would have become

⁵⁵ Ibid., Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 4 May 1879.

⁵⁶ Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 1: 30. Countess Széchényi's warmth and lively temperament come through in her correspondence with her mother-in-law published in Adlgasser, vol. 2.

⁵⁷ Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 1: 30. Berchtold goes on to say, somewhat inconsistently, that as a bachelor Aehrenthal was very popular in Russian court society whose "loose morals" he did not object to, but that after his marriage he became "sterner and more critical" reinforcing "his inborn pedantic streak" that led to his ostracism from certain circles of high society. Ibid., 32.

⁵⁸ SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 22 February 1908 (Adlgasser, 2: 932 n. 2003). When his wife was pregnant with their first child, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother that it seemed "comical" to him "that I look forward with joy to becoming a father." Ibid., St. Petersburg, 22 February 1904 (Adlgasser, 2: 848–849). "Life is now especially busy," he wrote to his mother in 1907, "because balls and dinners, the so-called pleasures of existence, keep increasing.... It is a real delight for me if I can steal into the nursery for a short time, where bright voices and friendly, rosy faces greet me. These moments are the bright side of my existence." Ibid., Vienna, 2 February 1907 (Adlgasser, 2: 919). Aehrenthal and his wife had three children: Caroline, b. 13 September 1904, d. 23 August 1998; Johann, b. 9 August 1905, d. 12 March 1972; and Elisabeth, b. 9 August 1909, d. 6 February 1971. Count Johann married Countess Ernestine Harrach (1903–1990) in 1932. Countess Elizabeth married Count Joseph Thun (1907–1976) in 1943. See the Aehrenthal family tree in Adlgasser, 2: 990–991.

truly depressed and ineffective. Manifestations of this suppression are seen first in a tendency to rationalize. In a letter to his mother in 1879, he wrote,

Strange to say, the yearning for country life and the melancholy necessarily involved with that has failed to appear this year. Perhaps the northern frost has choked this vital emotion in me. I can only be glad of that, since such desires, which are indeed impracticable, lead to nothing."⁵⁹

Aehrenthal also adopted certain mental compensations that allowed him to go on. In a letter to his mother from St. Petersburg in 1882 he said,

I view the opening of the season not without pleasure, for without social life it would be impossible to hold out for long in Petersburg. I was indeed not of that opinion when I first came here, and led more the life of a *loup-garou* [lone wolf]. However, this also belongs to ideas that I have surmounted. You see, dear mother, that after six years of diplomatic activity, your son has learned when in Rome do as the Romans do. The individual is a creature of custom. However, I hasten to add that this, in spite of my continuously being "bound to a chair in the city," often seems to me to be queer and also boring, and I would have the not evil inclination to set myself free again in the freer and healthier country life. At the same time, I think of your comfortable existence in Gross-Skal, which to share with you often entices me. Every profession, however, has its drawbacks.⁶⁰

The ambivalence expressed in the letter remained with him throughout his life. Later, as Aehrenthal's personality defenses began to become mobilized and integrated, and as expectations of him increased, we see the effects of sublimation manifesting themselves in his effectiveness as a diplomat and his ability to fuse himself with the emperor and also with his desire to preserve the monarchy. In the process, his personality was transformed. He became the "diplomat par excellence." The success achieved through the sublimation of his feelings of dependency brought him the approval of his parents, which minimized the tension of ambivalence in his private life. Yet he was never free from ambivalence. In that context, "beautiful Gross-Skal" takes on a special meaning as a symbol of parental approval, close family relationships, and the pleasures of country life, for all of which he yearned throughout his life.

After the transition, the personality of the mature Aehrenthal began to emerge. The foundation of that "marmoreal" personality structure was the belief in what was for Aehrenthal a kind of "holy mission" to preserve the

⁵⁹ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 12 April 1879.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 15 October 1882.

monarchy. The "holy mission" allowed him to integrate the different sides of his personality so that his drives, feelings, ideas, and behavior were experienced as being in harmony, permitting him to project outward the passionate and sensitive sides of his nature in ways that corresponded with his conscience and need for approval. Passion and spontaneity became attached to "a warm love of fatherland,"⁶¹ to an "invincible belief in the indispensability of the monarchy,"⁶² to defending the monarchy, to concocting plans to strengthen it, to numerous audiences with the emperor to counsel him and warn him of the need to take action, and to his conflicts with Gołuchowski over the latter's perceived weakness in defending the monarchy's interests.⁶³ In this way, passion and spontaneity were excluded from outward personal behavior, although signs of it appeared from time to time, especially near the end of his life, when the ravages of leukemia weakened his defenses. His indomitable optimism, which was the hallmark of his political attitudes and which contrasted sharply with the pessimism of his friends and relatives in Bohemia, was in part a manifestation of his psychological investment in the idea of the monarchy's survival. Against views such as those held by Count Oswald Thun-Salm that "in our country an optimist must commit suicide,"⁶⁴ Aehrenthal asserted, "As long as I am in the emperor's service, I will remain an optimist."⁶⁵ "I envy him [Alois] his optimism, which I absolutely cannot share," wrote Felix Aehrenthal to a friend in 1908.⁶⁶

In the "holy mission," the passionate and emotional young man, the good and obedient son, fused with the loyal and obedient servant and soldier of the emperor who did what he was commanded to do and went where he was ordered to go, even against his wishes. Typical of the way self, family, emperor, and state were wedded in Aehrenthal's consciousness to a point that blurred the distinctions between them is a letter to his mother in 1905, a year of internal crisis in Austria-Hungary and Russia: "In these disturbing times the only rays of hope are trust that God will not completely desert old Austria and

⁶¹ Emil Jettel [-Ettenach], "Graf Aehrenthal: Ein Gedenkblatt," *Deutsche Revue* 38/2 (April-June 1913), 123. Jettel, head of the Literary Bureau (press office) at the Ballhausplatz (1902-1910), knew Aehrenthal well. The short essay was meant to honor the first anniversary of Aehrenthal's death.

⁶² See 39 above.

⁶³ See 70-73 below.

⁶⁴ HHStA, NA/4, Oswald Thun-Salm to Aehrenthal, 10 April 1898.

⁶⁵ Jettel [-Ettenach], "Graf Aehrenthal," 124. Jettel indicates that Aehrenthal's assertion is in a letter to his mother. I have not been able to find the letter, but Aehrenthal's wife allowed Jettel to see some of her late husband's correspondence with his mother for the eulogy. See SAL, RAA/124, Countess Paula Aehrenthal to Berthold Molden, Prague, 2 February 1917.

⁶⁶ SAK, RAT-S/27, Felix Aehrenthal to Oswald Thun-Salm, 3 February 1908.

one's personal domestic happiness."⁶⁷ Again, in a letter to his mother upon becoming foreign minister in 1906 over his own protests of his unsuitability, he wrote, "Your old son has been caught by the old emperor! There is nothing left to do but to trust in God and do my duty. I have the consoling certainty that you, best of all mothers, accompany me on my thorny way with your blessing."⁶⁸ In a sense, he surrendered himself altruistically to his emperor and the Habsburg state, and in that altruistic surrender he fulfilled, at least partially, his emotional needs.⁶⁹ Responding to his mother's letter congratulating him on his having been raised to the dignity of a count as a reward for carrying out the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Aehrenthal wrote,

I did not desire the rise in rank...inwardly I was satisfied to have done my duty in the business [i.e., the annexation]. I view His Majesty's decoration as a general recognition for the action carried out. The emperor decorates *me*, but this decoration is beneficial to the *whole*.⁷⁰

Fatalism was an important part of Aehrenthal's personality. Fatalism is related to a feeling that there are some things about which nothing can be done. In the correspondence, we can see some roots of fatalism or, as it may be called, renunciation in his letters on the deaths of two of his sisters at an early age⁷¹ and the death of one of his best friends, Prince Wilhelm Auersperg, in a duel in 1877.⁷² In the main, though, the fatalism in Aehrenthal's personality was touched off by his separation from his parents. His fatalistic acceptance of his separation from a cherished way of life fed into the fusion of Aehrenthal the individual with his family, the emperor, the state, and God. A manifestation of this fatalism is contained in a letter that Aehrenthal, at the time an ambassa-

67 SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, Tsarskoe Selo (near St. Petersburg), 25 June 1905 (Adlgasser, 2: 885). The reference to disturbing times is to the revolution in Russia, the Russo-Japanese war, and Emperor Francis Joseph's constitutional conflict with the Hungarian government (1903-1906).

68 Ibid., Vienna, 24 October 1906 (Adlgasser, 2: 915).

69 On the notion of altruistic surrender see Martin Wagh, "The 'Evocation of a Proxy': A Psychological Maneuver, Its Use as a Defense, Its Purposes and Genesis," *Psychoanalytical Study of the Child* 17 (1962), 451-469. For a historical application see Otto Pflanze, "Toward a Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Bismarck," *American Historical Review* 77 (April 1972), 419-444.

70 SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 20 August 1909 (Adlgasser, 2: 958). The emphasis is in the original.

71 See 40 above.

72 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 9 March 1877. "How bad the world is," lamented Aehrenthal to his father. See also *ibid.*, 123, Baron Johann Aehrenthal to Alois, Gross-Skal, 21 October 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 463-464).

dor, wrote to his mother on New Year's Day, 1900: "I have ceased to entertain personal wishes; perhaps that is not good, but my life and what it brings is the way it is."⁷³ Even more striking is a letter from Foreign Minister Aehrenthal to his mother in October 1909:

In truth, there is no lack of troubles, but I stick with it, confidently looking to the future, trusting in God and true to the motto I chose [upon being raised to the dignity of a count]: "Do not rejoice at good fortune; do not lack courage in the storm."⁷⁴

Aehrenthal's fatalism allowed him to hold to his optimistic belief in the vitality of the monarchy despite his own awareness of "pathological symptoms"⁷⁵ in the Austro-Hungarian body politic. His duty was to do what he could to preserve the monarchy and leave the rest to destiny or to God.

Aehrenthal's ability to fuse himself in the "holy mission" with family, emperor, state, and God so that all were one is the taproot of his mature or, as I have characterized it, "marmoreal" personality. The character traits of this kind of personality structure resemble those of a saint or a zealot. Outwardly there is determination, stubbornness, arrogance, and strongly held convictions. These are linked to inward traits of idealism, zeal, tenacity, and fatalism. Underneath the calm and judicious exterior of Aehrenthal the diplomat lay the zealot's passion and idealism. "Aehrenthal's special characteristic," writes an Austro-Hungarian diplomat in his memoirs, "was the *feu sacré*, the passionate devotion to the job and tenacity."⁷⁶ As in the personality of a saint, Aehrenthal's outward certainty of self was linked to an inner feeling of transcendence of self, that is, a feeling of identification with something beyond him. In his "holy mission" to preserve the monarchy, Aehrenthal achieved his transcendence of self. Joseph Redlich sensed this when he wrote in his obituary for Aehrenthal that "Aehrenthal was perhaps the last one who embodied within himself the grand sides of the old Austrian character: the belief in the monarchy and its providential mission in this realm, the belief in the monarchy to which he dedicated his life."⁷⁷

The ego-fusing function of the idea of preserving the Habsburg Monarchy rooted in his intense dependency explains the near-obsessive commitment to it that distinguishes Aehrenthal from all of the other Habsburg foreign ministers in the era of dualism. Friedrich Engel-Janosi points to this psychological

⁷³ Ibid., 123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 1 January 1900 (Adlgasser, 2: 747-748).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 124, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 31 October 1909 (Adlgasser, 2: 960).

⁷⁵ See 98 below.

⁷⁶ Franckenstein, *Diplomat of Destiny*, 47.

⁷⁷ Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 125, 18 February 1912.

dimension of Aehrenthal's political thought in an essay on Habsburg foreign policy:

Aehrenthal's guiding ideas...were his faith in the mission and in the strength of the Habsburg Empire to renew itself, and his wish to begin the recovery by a grandly conceived foreign policy, to set it [the Habsburg Empire] a great goal.⁷⁸

Aehrenthal's foreign policy, according to Engel-Janosi, was the last attempt since the days of Prince Felix Schwarzenberg in the early 1850s "to bind together the peoples and nationalities of the empire through a great foreign policy concept."⁷⁹

For the most part, Aehrenthal's relations with others were modeled around filial and father images. The two were interchangeable. He could stand as a son in his relationship to father surrogates such as his patron Count Gustav Kálnoky and Emperor Francis Joseph, advising and counseling the latter as he did his father.⁸⁰ At the same time, he could stand in a fatherly relation to those below him, especially younger diplomats — Baron Alexander von Musulin, Count Alexander Hoyos, Count Johann Forgács, Baron Georg Franckenstein — whom he helped and encouraged.⁸¹ Perhaps his rivalry with Gółuchowski might be understood, in part, as a "sibling" rivalry for the favor and approval of the emperor-father. Aehrenthal was mentioned as Gółuchowski's successor almost from the time Gółuchowski assumed office.⁸²

His own highly developed sense of duty and loyalty to the emperor as a surrogate father may have contributed partly to the sharpness of Aehrenthal's conflicts with Archduke Francis Ferdinand and Chief of Staff Conrad von Hötzendorf. In different ways, both men disobeyed the emperor and made him unhappy — Francis Ferdinand by having married against Emperor Francis Joseph's wishes and by his *frondeur*-like opposition to the ruler,⁸³ and Conrad

78 Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "Detruisez l'Autriche-Hongrie! Österreich und die Westmächte 1815–1918," in Schulmeister, ed., *Spectrum Austriae*, 239–240.

79 Ibid.

80 See chapter 4 for Aehrenthal's relations with Kálnoky.

81 Franckenstein, later ambassador of the first Austrian republic in London, recalls that at his first meeting with Aehrenthal, in 1907, when he was appointed a junior secretary in the foreign ministry, "I felt an immediate admiration and liking for this statesman, who was later to be like a father to me and do so much in shaping and facilitating my career." Franckenstein, *Diplomat of Destiny*, 43. On Musulin see Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 86, 155–159; on Hoyos and Forgács, see n. 85 below.

82 See chapter 6.

83 In his diary, Joseph Maria Baernreither bemoaned that "the 'inner dualism' that now exists, the emperor who sits isolated in Schönbrunn, and Archduke Francis Ferdinand, whose impetuous and nervous attempts to take over the reins has to undermine our political situ-

by his persistence in attacking the monarchy's foreign policy even when commanded to desist.⁸⁴ Both men were, in a sense, prodigal sons.

The idea of the "holy mission" provides some insight into Aehrenthal's good relations with younger diplomats such as those named above, who formed an Aehrenthal "retinue" in the Ballhausplatz. He could relate to younger people as he related to the emperor and to the state; only it was the younger men who related to him as a father figure whom they revered, obeyed, and served, and who responded enthusiastically to his ringing affirmations of the monarchy's strength and greatness and to his call for a dynamic foreign policy to overcome internal difficulties and confirm the monarchy's status as a Great Power.⁸⁵ With younger diplomats, no real give and take was necessary. Hence, he could avoid the pain engendered by having his ideas challenged. The idea of the "holy mission" could remain intact. Such was not the case with men his own age such as Górchowski, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and Conrad; they could and did challenge his ideas and policies, causing him to become tense and to bristle.⁸⁶ The evidence suggests that Aehrenthal's strong need to keep the idea of the "holy mission" intact led him to select as coworkers men who agreed with his views. Perhaps this is the basis for the somewhat exaggerated charge that Aehrenthal could not put up with men of any independence of mind or that he surrounded himself with diplomatic nullities.⁸⁷

To complete the profile of Aehrenthal's personality, one must not forget the influence of his generally poor health on his psychic states and behavior. While it is not possible to make conclusive statements in this regard, the data are sufficient to offer some suggestive insights in this area. As mentioned previously, the evidence in the letters points to Aehrenthal's use of denial and optimism as defenses against bad health.⁸⁸ In the context of Aehrenthal's life, his optimism about the survival of the monarchy may be interpreted as his wish for his own survival, and his passion to rejuvenate the Habsburg Monarchy's health may be seen as a projection of his own willful efforts to achieve good

ation." HHStA, NBA, diary, vol. 10, entry of 14 December 1912, 9. For some recent psychological reflections on the archduke's behavior see Rudolph Binion, "From Mayerling to Sarajevo," *Journal of Modern History* 47 (June 1975): 309–316. See also n. 48 above.

⁸⁴ See n. 49 above.

⁸⁵ See Fritz Fellner, "Die 'Mission Hoyos': Betrachtungen zur österreichisch-ungarischen Politik im Juli 1914," in Fellner, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund: Studien zur Geschichte der internationalen Beziehungen 1882–1919*, Heidrun Maschl and Brigitte Mazohl-Wallnig, eds. (Vienna–Munich, 1994), 112–141. On Forgách see Fellner, "Zwischen Kriegsbegeisterung und Resignation: Ein Memorandum des Sektionschefs Graf Forgách vom Jänner 1915," in *ibid.*, 142–153.

⁸⁶ See 63–64 above.

⁸⁷ Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 234, and Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 57, 14 May 1910.

⁸⁸ See 39–41 above.

health. In this regard, the many references in the letters to the monarchy's weakness and the use of physiological and medical terms to describe that weakness, itself a disguised form of awareness of his own poor health and a way of abreacting fears associated with it, are revealing. He castigated political pessimism as "the hereditary disease of the Austrians,"⁸⁹ and he saw "healthy elements in the monarchy struggling for existence."⁹⁰ In Aehrenthal's repression and sublimation of the consciousness of his poor health, we can see some additional wellsprings of his famed policy of action as foreign minister. "The empire ails for want of action," Aehrenthal told a young Ballhausplatz official in 1909. "Action is everything, out of action grows faith, and the faith will make itself felt abroad."⁹¹

The emotionally and psychically charged quality of Aehrenthal's calls for an active foreign policy fed into his conflict with Gołuchowski. In Aehrenthal's view, Gołuchowski's quietist policy was not conducive to rejuvenating the Habsburg political structure. It was more a policy for a sick person for whom strenuous activity is dangerous. Aehrenthal wanted to treat the monarchy like a healthy organism or one capable of attaining that state. This led to different perceptions of power and its sources. Gołuchowski's idea of power was that it was not something to be acquired: you either had it or you did not. It is power that permits the acquisition of certain things or the ability to act in certain ways. For Gołuchowski, an active foreign policy presumed power, and power was what Austria-Hungary did not possess. In his view, the monarchy's internal structure was too fragile to be subjected to political experiments of the kind recommended by Aehrenthal. For Aehrenthal it was the other way around. Power was not something given but, like good health, something to be strenuously striven for and attained. Power, in Aehrenthal's thinking, was an end and not a means. Hence, he saw an active policy as a means to restore the prestige of the monarchy and to acquire power for it.⁹²

As Aehrenthal tested his personal strength, so the monarchy had to test its political strength as a Great Power. The psychological motives associated with his health problems that intruded into Aehrenthal's thinking contributed to the ambiguity of his concept of power. "Force," Aehrenthal remarked to Jo-

89 See chapter 6 below.

90 Ibid.

91 E. U. Cormons (pseud. for Emmanuel Urban), *Schicksale und Schatten: Eine österreichische Autobiographie* (Salzburg, 1951), 114.

92 On the differences between Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski see *ibid.*, 81–87; Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 155–159; Eurof Walters, "Gołuchowski and Aehrenthal," *The Contemporary Review* 178 (1950), 217–224; Francis Roy Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo: The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary 1866–1914* (London, 1972), 211–212, 289–291. More specifically see Wank, "Varieties of Political Despair."

seph Redlich, "is the midwife of history."⁹³ Yet Aehrenthal was never clear as to the sources and components of power. At times he regarded national, social, and economic forces as the foundations of power, while at times he saw them as extensions or effects of power; that is, he wavered between perceiving power as something given or something to be achieved. This vacillation is reflected in his numerous memoranda on the subject of the interaction of domestic and foreign policy. In an 1895 memorandum, Aehrenthal stated that Russia was in no hurry to conclude a Balkan agreement with Austria-Hungary because it "counts much more on the internal dissension within the monarchy with its symptoms of a process of decomposition" to restrain Vienna. The attitude of St. Petersburg would soon change if in Austria-Hungary "a rapid consolidation takes place, and all of our efforts in the first place should be directed toward that goal."⁹⁴ In 1898, however, he advised Gołuchowski that "Only through a policy inspired by historical traditions [i.e., expansion into the Balkans and incorporation into the monarchy of territory there] will it be possible to unite the peoples of the monarchy and lead them to a glorious future."⁹⁵ At some level of political consciousness, Aehrenthal was aware that he was perhaps reversing the logical order of things by seeking to rescue the internally weak monarchy through outward projections of power that it did not possess. "The recovery must ... begin internally if the monarchy shall again play a respectable role in foreign affairs," wrote Aehrenthal to Heinrich Friedjung at the beginning of 1900.⁹⁶ Thus, one finds in Aehrenthal's bold programs of action cautionary statements such as that which appears in the 1895 memorandum: "In view of the complex and troubled dualistic relations [between Austria and Hungary], it probably would be better to put off the annexation of Serbia."⁹⁷ Aehrenthal struck the same antinomic notes of boldness and caution in his historically sweeping memoranda of 1898 and 1907.⁹⁸

⁹³ Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 7, 18 February 1909.

⁹⁴ HHStA, PA I/461, Geheimliasse XXV, *Denkschrift des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, September 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 74).

⁹⁵ *Denkschrift des neuernannten Botschafters in Petersburg [Aehrenthal] ... 31. Dezember 1898: Unser Verhältnis zu Russland betrachtet vom Gesichtspunkt der inneren und äusseren Politik*. The memorandum, in German, is appended to Eurof Walters, "Austro-Russian Relations under Goluchowski, 1895-1906," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 32 (1953-1954): 196-203. The memorandum is also printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 464. It is discussed in chapter 5 below.

⁹⁶ HHStA, NF/5, Aehrenthal to Friedjung, St. Petersburg, 25 January 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 147).

⁹⁷ See n. 94 above.

⁹⁸ The 1898 memorandum is cited in n. 95 above. The 1907 memoranda are appended to Wank, "Aehrenthal's Programme for the Constitutional Transformation of the Habsburg Monarchy," 522-535. They are also printed in Wank, 2: Nos. 335-337. Both documents will be discussed in the second volume of this biography.

Until 1909, Aehrenthal exuded optimism and faith in the vitality of the monarchy. His sanguine attitude was reflected in his policy of action as foreign minister, above all the Sanjak of Novibazar railroad and Bosnian annexation projects, as well as his long-range plans for constitutional and territorial reorganization of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁹⁹ Starting in the winter of 1909–1910, Aehrenthal began to experience the progressive eroding effect of leukemia, which affected his sense of wellbeing and, consequently, his private and public behavior. According to Countess Paula Aehrenthal, her husband's sickness was constant after February 1910, although it had been bad for years before that.¹⁰⁰ The medical history of Aehrenthal's disease, written after his death by the attending physician, confirms Countess Aehrenthal's report.¹⁰¹

As the disease took its debilitating course, Aehrenthal's personality underwent a change. The process was hastened by Aehrenthal's insistence on personally conducting the complicated business of the Ballhausplatz even when, on doctor's orders, he was supposed to be resting in Marienbad or Abbazia.¹⁰² This, together with the reverberations of the Friedjung affair in the delegations and, according to Countess Aehrenthal, his conflicts with Conrad von Hötzendorf and Archduke Francis Ferdinand in the last six months of his life placed a severe strain on his nervous system.¹⁰³ In the last year and a half of his life, his optimism became diluted, and his fatalism stronger. His defenses weakened, and the passionate side of his personality became visible in his private behavior. He became somewhat frantic.¹⁰⁴ Memoirs of several Austro-Hungarian and foreign politicians and diplomats mention that after 1909, Aehrenthal appeared haughtier and more inflexible than before. These same sources report that he was given to passionate outbursts and exhibited signs of emotional instability.¹⁰⁵ In the fall of 1911, for example, Aehrenthal's *chef de cabinet*, Count Friedrich Szápáry, had to interrupt a meeting in Aehrenthal's office between the foreign minister and the Italian ambassador, Duke Giuseppe d'Avarna, because Szápáry heard his chief ranting at the Italian

99 The constitutional and territorial reorganization plan is cited in n. 98 above. On the Sanjak railroad see Solomon Wank, "Aehrenthal and the Sanjak of Novibazar Railway Project: A Reappraisal," *Slavonic and East European Review* 42/98 (June 1964): 353–369. On the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, see, in general, Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, 280–287.

100 Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 128, 7 March 1912.

101 SAL, RAA/126, *Krankengeschichte Seiner Excellenz des Herren Grafen Louis Aehrenthal* — The medical history was written by Hofrat Dr. Eduard Geiger and dated Vienna, 6 June 1912.

102 Ibid. In general, see Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 229–242.

103 See Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 128, 7 March 1912.

104 Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 231.

105 See, for example, Cormons, *Schicksale und Schatten*, 90.

ambassador in an uncontrollable way.¹⁰⁶ The breakdown in his defenses may be seen in the usually tightlipped Aehrenthal's uncharacteristic glibness. He spoke with startling openness on political matters to a newly appointed junior Ballhausplatz press bureau official,¹⁰⁷ and Franz Aehrenthal told Joseph Redlich about a dinner conversation he had with his brother in November 1911, that Alois had never spoken to him so openly.¹⁰⁸

As his own strength ebbed, Aehrenthal's foreign policy underwent a change. It became cautious; that is, it lost the dynamism and breadth of his early years as foreign minister and became more of a holding action.¹⁰⁹ There were, of course, political reasons for this loss of activism related to the severe international crisis sparked by the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and by the real complexity of the monarchy's internal problems. Yet the correspondence between the loss of energy in the political sphere and similar loss in the personal sphere suggests that the two were mutually reinforcing. It is almost as if his perceptions of his own serious illness led him to perceive the monarchy's political illness as more serious than he had previously thought. His conflict with the chief of the general staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, may be seen in this context. Aehrenthal's opposition to Conrad's aggressive militaristic proposals for solving the monarchy's internal and Balkan problems was thoroughly consistent with his own activism before 1910. Aehrenthal's primary commitment was to the preservation of the historically evolved Habsburg Austrian state and to the monarchical principle. Before 1909, he saw an active foreign policy both internally and externally as the means to achieve those ends; after 1909, he saw caution and restraint, especially with regard to the use of military force, as the appropriate means to attain his goals.

During the last months of his life, Aehrenthal suffered terribly. "I can only tell you that it is horrible to have to see the misery without being able to help in any way," wrote Felix Aehrenthal to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg several weeks before Alois's death.¹¹⁰ Why did Aehrenthal continue in office in the face of so much suffering? Why did he not resign? At the end of January 1912 he told Joseph Redlich that he was going to resign and should have done so long ago.¹¹¹ On 18 January, Aehrenthal, too ill to do it on his own, requested Baron Franz von Schiessl, the emperor's civil *chef de cabinet*, to transmit his request for permission to resign to Emperor Francis Joseph.¹¹² Still, if he

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰⁸ Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 113, 19 November 1911.

¹⁰⁹ Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 175.

¹¹⁰ SAT, RAS, Felix Aehrenthal to Karl Schwarzenberg, Vienna, 29 January 1912.

¹¹¹ Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 121, 27 January 1912.

¹¹² HHStA, NS/1, notebook entry, 18 January 1912. See also Solomon Wank, "The Appointment

should have resigned long ago, was it — as some have maintained — vanity or an overweening love of power and the trappings of his office that had prevented him from doing so? At best, these reasons are superficial. "Foreign policy in the monarchy was carried on before me and will be carried on after me," Aehrenthal said to Redlich.¹¹³ Those are not the words of a vain or pretentious man. The answer to the question lies partly in Aehrenthal's personality, in the first instance in his highly developed sense of duty, his filial sense of loyalty, his zealousness, and his fatalism. Once again, Joseph Redlich strikes the right note: "In the last years, as his physical strength ebbed, there burned within him even more strongly, almost uncannily strongly, the will to lead and to set things in order the way he believed was right. In that, he remained the most loyal servant of his master."¹¹⁴

A manifestation of Aehrenthal's strong sense of duty is his statement to Redlich that he stayed on after 1909 because he felt that he had to clear up matters related to the annexation and push through the army credits.¹¹⁵ His filial feelings for the emperor also prevented his resignation. Several times he was on the verge of submitting his resignation, but each time, he drew back. Emperor Francis Joseph did not easily separate himself from those who had surrounded him for a long time and especially a foreign minister whom he valued highly.¹¹⁶ As Alois Aehrenthal strove to avoid making his real father unhappy, so he could not bear making his imperial father unhappy, especially for purely personal reasons. So he stayed on. It was not his wish that he remain foreign minister until 15 February, just two days before his death; it was the wish of the emperor.¹¹⁷ Aehrenthal, it will be remembered, had advised Emperor Francis Joseph, on January 18, that the post be filled immediately with someone else.

With regard to Aehrenthal's filial feelings, it might be well to recall here Maria Aehrenthal's letter to her son in April 1911, in which she expressed her expectation that her son would not give up his office and that he would continue to perform salutary services for "our poor Austria."¹¹⁸ Given Aehrenthal's need for parental approval, his mother's expectations — in this case perhaps loaded with her need to suppress consciousness of the possibility of her beloved son's death — were a powerful incentive to suffer the pain of remaining in office.

of Count Berchtold as Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 33 (July 1963), 143–151, esp. 144.

113 Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 121, 27 January 1912.

114 Ibid., 125, 18 February 1912.

115 Ibid., 121, 27 January 1912.

116 Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 231.

117 Ibid., 234. See also Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 2: 248–249.

118 See 57 above.

In August 1911, Aehrenthal actually did submit his resignation to Emperor Francis Joseph. The request to be allowed to resign came after Archduke Francis Ferdinand had forced Francis Joseph to dismiss the minister of war, Baron Franz von Schönaich, who had supported Aehrenthal against the chief of the general staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf.¹¹⁹ Aehrenthal saw in Schönaich's fall an act that went against his convictions about the proper conduct of foreign policy. Resignation in that situation, as in a similar one in 1904 mentioned earlier, was in keeping with his conscience.¹²⁰ The emperor, assuring Aehrenthal that he enjoyed his full confidence, refused to accept the resignation.¹²¹ As a dutiful son and servant, Aehrenthal could bow to the emperor's wish that he continue in office. Perhaps the thoughts that Aehrenthal expressed to Redlich about resigning near the end of January 1912 reflect, in part, a lowering of the demands placed on him by his conscience after his mother's death in October 1911 (his father had died in 1898).

On the deepest psychological level, however, his having refrained from resigning might be interpreted as a consequence of the obsessive nature of the idea of the "holy mission." The obsessive character of that idea was strikingly revealed in his conflict with Conrad von Hötzendorf, not in the substance of the conflict — Aehrenthal's rejection of Conrad's militaristic solutions to the monarchy's problems was in fact a sagacious act — as in the fact that during the height of the conflict in the summer and fall of 1911, Aehrenthal refused radiation treatments to control the disease because he could not spare the time from political matters.¹²² As political and personal stress increased, and as he got sicker, he saw his life's work shattering around him. Given the way his personal needs of identity with his parents and Gross-Skal were fused with his identification with the Habsburg state and emperor, the threatening dissolution of the empire, which he perceived above all in Conrad's urgings to unleash a preventive war against Italy and Serbia,¹²³ was at the same time a threat to self and family. The psychological motive imparted to him the uncanny strength — to use Redlich's phrase — to keep going and, in the end, to give priority to preventing the monarchy's dissolution over prolonging his own life.

119 ÖUA III, No. 2601, Vortrag an den Kaiser, 22 August 1911. Molden does not mention the resignation in his biographical study even though he knew about it. Aehrenthal, who at the time was vacationing in Mendel, a mountain resort located in the Tyrol south of Bozen/Bolzano, kept his resignation secret even from those aides who were with him, and Countess Aehrenthal did not want it made public. SAL, RAA/124, Countess Paula Aehrenthal to Berthold Molden, Prague, 11 April 1917.

120 See 62–63 above.

121 ÖUA III, No. 2602, Schiessl to Aehrenthal, 25 August 1911.

122 SAL, RAA/126, *Krankengeschichte Seiner Excellenz des Herren Grafen Louis Aehrenthal*.

123 See n. 49 above.

In the last months of his life, the marmoreal personality seemed to reassert itself. All reports of his death emphasize that he died very grandly, like a Roman Stoic, calm and composed. "He departed," wrote Joseph Redlich in his diary, "like a philosopher, peaceful and content, with his singular and strong will, as he had lived."¹²⁴ Before his death, he "put his house in order."¹²⁵ He made his courageous last struggle against Conrad's urgings to preventive war and wrote a long memorandum for the emperor laying down the main lines of foreign policy for the future.¹²⁶ As he lay on his deathbed, he calmly discussed the choice of his successor as foreign minister with the head of the emperor's civil cabinet, Baron Franz von Schiessl, and continued to conduct foreign policy until almost the last hour.¹²⁷ On 17 February 1912, the day of his death, he took leave of his closest colleagues in the foreign ministry, comforting them in their grief with words of thanks and praise.¹²⁸

Next, he said goodbye to relatives who were present and then "took leave of his children and his wife in a moving way, without a word of complaint."¹²⁹ After receiving the last rites of the Catholic Church, he lapsed into a coma at about 8:30 P.M. and died a little over an hour later, at 9:45 P.M.¹³⁰ Several hours before he lost consciousness, the emperor's military *aide-de-camp*, Count Eduard Paar, arrived at the bedside of the dying minister bearing the insignia of the Order of St. Stephan studded with diamonds (*Brillantten*). The actual award of that prestigious order had taken place several years earlier but without the diamonds.¹³¹ In an accompanying note, Emperor Francis Joseph assured the dying foreign minister of his undiminished confidence in him and his foreign policy, which, pursued prudently under difficult conditions, "assures your praiseworthy and honorable remembrance."¹³²

124 Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 125, 18 February 1912.

125 Ibid.

126 ÖUA III, No. 3095, Geheime Denkschrift, 12 December 1912.

127 HHStA, NS/1, notebook entries, 18, 19, 21 January 1912. See also Wank, "The Appointment of Count Leopold Berchtold," 144–146.

128 Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 233.

129 Ibid., and SAL, RAA/126, *Krankengeschichte Seiner Excellenz des Herren Grafen Louis Aehrenthal*. The quoted words are from the medical history.

130 Molden is correct when he writes that "even the doctors were impressed by the fearlessness with which he faced death." Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 233.

131 Diamonds were not typically awarded with the bestowal of an order. This was a specific honor that could be made at the time of the bestowal or later as happened with Aehrenthal. Why Emperor Francis Joseph refrained from bestowing the order with diamonds earlier is curious in light of his high regard for him. I am grateful to William D. Godsey, Jr. for giving me the foregoing information.

132 The note is printed in Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 234.

Alois Aehrenthal had fulfilled his duty to the last and won the recognition of the emperor as earlier he had won the recognition of his parents. His death was symbolic of the life he had led.¹³³ "Aehrenthal appears to have died like a hero," noted Count Albert Mensdorff, Austro-Hungarian ambassador at London, in his diary.¹³⁴ After a church ceremony in Vienna on 22 February, his body was transported to Doxan, where it was buried in the family crypt next to his parents,¹³⁵ to whom he was attached by a love and dependency in which lay the deepest roots of his character.

133 On the symbolic relationship between how one lives and how one dies, see Leon Prochnik, *Endings: Death, Glorious and Otherwise as Faced by Ten Outstanding Figures of Our Time* (New York, 1974).

134 HHStA, NMe, diary entry, 24 February 1912.

135 Molden, *Alois Graf Aehrenthal*, 234.

THE *MENTALITÉ* OF AN IMPERIAL HABSBURG PATRIOT AND STATESMAN

In his memoirs, Alexander von Musulin, who as a young diplomat was a member of the "Aehrenthal retinue" in the Ballhausplatz, writes that most Austro-Hungarian diplomats "became estranged from their homeland as a consequence of their decades-long stay abroad and felt little inclination to maintain political contact with the homeland."¹ Aehrenthal was an exception. "During his entire service abroad," writes Musulin, "Aehrenthal never became estranged from the internal political questions that moved the monarchy."²

As a young attaché in Paris and St. Petersburg, Aehrenthal avidly read the newspapers customarily received by Austro-Hungarian embassies abroad. He relied mainly, however, on letters from his father to keep in touch with political developments, although his correspondence with his mother also touched on political questions. Aehrenthal's letters to his father often begin with, "I am following with great interest ..." or "Thank you, dear father, for your long and detailed letter [about a political event] ..." After leaving Vienna, where he had been stationed from 1884 until 1888, for St. Petersburg, his circle of correspondents widened. He corresponded with Count Gustav Kálnoky and Kajetan von Mérey, a Ballhausplatz official and later Gołuchowski's *chef de cabinet* and ambassador to Italy. Typically, Mérey's letters begin, "In accordance with your wish, I want ... to give you a snapshot of the general [internal] situation as I comprehend it."³ On their part, Aehrenthal's letters frequently contained passages such as, "I will be following the [compromise] negotiations [in Budapest] with the greatest interest."⁴ Writing to Aehrenthal in 1903 about the unstable political situation in Hungary, Count Leopold Berchtold, at the time a legation counselor in the St. Petersburg embassy and later Aehrenthal's successor as ambassador and foreign minister, says that he would write again if he learned anything new: "I would in that case send you a brief report, knowing that you are also interested in questions of internal politics."⁵

As minister to Romania (1895–1898) and ambassador to Russia (1899–1906), Aehrenthal stood in continual correspondence with leading political

1 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 178.

2 *Ibid.*

3 HHStA, NA/3, Mérey to Aehrenthal, 21 December 1887 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 49).

4 *Ibid.*, NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, St. Petersburg, 9 June 1888.

5 *Ibid.*, NA/1, Berchtold to Aehrenthal, 7 July 1903 (Wank, 1: No. 218). See chapter 6 below on the unrest in Hungary.

personalities of the monarchy. Heinrich Friedjung, a German–Austrian historian and journalist, and Joseph Maria Baernreither, a prominent Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowner's parliamentary representative and sometime cabinet minister, kept him informed on internal problems and policies on a more or less regular basis. Friedjung and Baernreither, among others, sent him long reports on internal affairs, newspaper clippings, articles, and speeches of members of parliament and government figures.⁶ On Czech–German relations and aristocratic politics in Austria, Aehrenthal, in addition to his correspondence with Baernreither, exchanged letters with his boyhood friend the Constitutionally Loyal Party leader Count Oswald Thun-Salm and with the Conservative Large Landowners Party leaders Counts Karl and Ferdinand Buquoy and Prince Karl Schwarzenberg.⁷ During the years of political crisis following the issuance of the Badeni language ordinances in 1897, Aehrenthal corresponded with the Bohemian–German *Fortschrittspartei* (Progressive Party) deputy Ludwig Schlesinger and the Young Czech leader Karel Kramář.⁸ Aehrenthal's letters to his mother indicate that from time to time he corresponded with Ernest von Koerber, the Austrian prime minister from 1900 until 1904.⁹

Of course, not all of Aehrenthal's knowledge of Austro-Hungarian internal affairs was gained from newspapers or letters. During the years 1884–1888 and 1894–1895, when he was stationed at the Ballhausplatz in Vienna, Aehrenthal was personally able to keep in touch with domestic politics. From 1896 until 1906, when he was serving abroad in Bucharest and St. Petersburg, his home leaves averaged three months a year.¹⁰ Having established Aehrenthal's marked interest in domestic politics, it seems logical to inquire into his cast of mind.

According to Musulin, who knew him well, Aehrenthal aimed at creating an Austrian state "above the national state, a state system of a higher order, a kind of anticipatory League of Nations," which would offer "a comfortable home to the different nationalities ... allowing them at the same time to enjoy all of the benefits of belonging to a great European power."¹¹ Aehrenthal's foreign policy, Musulin says, "is understandable only to those who see it as a preliminary condition from which internal political consequences later were to

6 See Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 33, Baernreither's letters to Aehrenthal in HHStA, NA/1, and Friedjung's letters to Aehrenthal in *ibid.*, 2. The letters of both men are printed in Wank, parts 1 and 2.

7 See chapter 5 below.

8 *Ibid.*

9 I have been able to find only a copy of one letter: Aehrenthal to Koerber, 5 January 1906. The letter is in Stb/HS, NF/1.

10 HHStA, AR, Fach 4/Personalia, Carton 5, Aehrenthal-Urlaube.

11 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 158–159.

be drawn."¹² Musulin believes that if Aehrenthal had not died prematurely he might have been able to save the monarchy from collapse.¹³ Is Musulin right? Were Aehrenthal's sociopolitical consciousness and reform ideas really adequate for solving the Danubian Monarchy's complicated national and social conflicts? Aehrenthal's correspondence as well as other documents that have become available in recent years provide insights into Aehrenthal's political values and attitudes that allow us to assess the validity of Musulin's views. In addition, Aehrenthal's correspondence tells us quite a bit about the ways of thinking and feeling — and the symbols that gave expression to them — that underlay the domestic and foreign policies espoused by the imperial and aristocratic ruling elite.

The Political Legacy of the Parental House

Aehrenthal's interest in internal politics sprang from his home environment. He grew up in the midst of the chronic nationality conflict between Czechs and Germans in Bohemia. The Aehrenthal estates were located on the Czech-German language border but clearly within the Czech area. Prague, the provincial capital, was ethnically divided, with a German minority declining in influence and numbers. Aehrenthal later bitterly condemned the nationalist forces for having "laid waste our beautiful fatherland."¹⁴ His father, a leading member, as mentioned earlier, of the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners Party in the Bohemian diet, enjoyed great prestige in Bohemian-German political circles until his death in 1898.¹⁵ This is attested by the fact that in the late 1880s, the Feudal Conservative leader, Count Karl Buquoy, sought to negotiate with Aehrenthal's father a reunification of the politically divided nobility there,¹⁶ as well as by the fact that the *Palais* Aehrenthal on Wenceslaus Square in Prague became the target of rock-throwing Czech demonstrators during the tense political crisis triggered by the Badeni language ordinances in 1897.¹⁷ In the politicized atmosphere of the parental home, the perceptive

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ KA, Nachlass Beck, Aehrenthal to General Baron Friedrich von Beck, St. Petersburg, 20 August 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 555). Beck was chief of the Austro-Hungarian general staff (1881–1906).

¹⁵ See 34–35 above.

¹⁶ See the section "Differences with the Feudal Conservatives" in this chapter and chapter 4 below.

¹⁷ SAL, RAA/123, Baron Johann Aehrenthal to Alois Aehrenthal, Prague, 3 December 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 673–675).

young Alois early became aware of the complexity of the nationalities question and its significance for the future of the Habsburg Monarchy. This original interest in internal politics was stimulated further by the intimate connection between domestic politics and foreign policy that Aehrenthal perceived even as a young diplomat.¹⁸

Although the ancestral roots of the paternal side of the Aehrenthal family go back to Czech small landowners and artisans, by the time of Johann Friedrich, the family considered itself thoroughly German, and its identification with the Germans in Cisleithania was intertwined with the family tradition of strong loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty and an undogmatic attachment to the Catholic Church.¹⁹ This German orientation was reinforced by Aehrenthal's mother.²⁰ The Benatek-Ronsperg branch of the Thun-Hohenstein family, from which Marie Aehrenthal came, was, along with the Klösterle (Kláštorec) branch headed by Count Oswald Thun-Salm, a supporter of the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners.²¹ The Tetschen (Děčín) branch of the family was, on the other hand, headed by the notable Czech-inclined leader of the Feudal Conservative Large Landowners, Count (since 1911 Prince) Franz Thun-Hohenstein, Bohemian *Statthalter* (governor) (1889–1896, 1911–1915) and Austrian prime minister (1898–1899), whose government Aehrenthal helped bring down.²²

Aehrenthal's approach to politics was influenced by the principles and programs of his father's party. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners represented what is called the *Alt-Liberal* (Old Liberal) position, which was in fact a moderate conservative one.²³ This party arose as a consequence of a split in the ranks of the large landowners that was brought about by the introduction of the liberal-centralist February patent of 1861, which, after the conclusion of the *Ausgleich* (compromise) with Hungary, became the basis for the December 1867 constitution in Austria.²⁴ The two wings of the Large Landowners Party, of which

18 See 92–93 below.

19 Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 32–33.

20 Ibid.

21 On the Klösterle branch see Thun und Hohenstein, *Beiträge zu unserer Familiengeschichte*, 24. Oswald Thun-Hohenstein added the name Salm-Reifferscheidt in 1897 after he inherited his mother's estate, but he mostly signed his name as Thun or Thun-Salm. See the short biography in Rutkowski, 1: 22–24.

22 On the Tetschen branch see Thun und Hohenstein, *Beiträge zu unserer Familiengeschichte*, 25.

23 See Hugo Hantsch, "Aussenminister Alois Lexa Graf Aehrenthal," in Hantsch, ed., *Gestalter der Geschichte Österreichs*. Studien der Wiener Katholischen Akademie, vol. 2 (Innsbruck–Vienna, 1962), 515.

24 Allmayer-Beck, "Die Träger der staatlichen Macht," 267. Some of the material draws on my

the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners Party was, after the defeat of the liberals in the elections of 1879, the smaller, really constituted alternative strategies for preserving the interests of the great landowners and conservative-aristocratic sociopolitical values against the threat of the lower social classes.

The Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners Party was composed of those large landowners who had made peace with the German-Austrian liberal bourgeois *Verfassungspartei* (Constitutional or Liberal Party). The constituency of the Liberal Party had grown increasingly elitist and moderate in the face of democratic challenges from below. The Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners, along with their upper-middle-class liberal political allies, stood for support of a centralized system and a parliament based on a franchise stressing wealth and social status. They believed in the future of a German-led Austria as a Great Power under the Habsburg dynasty. Conversely, they were convinced that the Great Power position of the Habsburg Empire, which provided the *raison d'être* for the dominant socioeconomic and political position of the German-Austrians, could be preserved only if they remained in command. It is in this sense that the patriotism and loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty of the constitutionally loyal nobility and German-Austrian liberal political and intellectual group around Joseph Maria Baernreither and Joseph Redlich, both closely associated politically with Aehrenthal, should be understood.²⁵

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Constitutionally Loyal nobility and the German-Austrian liberals, along with most of the Bohemian-Germans, were unable to think in any terms but those of a German-Czech national struggle and the defense of "*Deutschtum*" (Germanness) against an encroaching Slavic tide. In the course of the struggle, the Constitutionally Loyal nobility and the German-Austrian liberal bourgeoisie lost some of their flexibility and became heavily committed to the German nationalist cause as a way of retaining political significance. In fact, the Constitutionally Loyal

article, "Aristocrats and Politics in Austria, 1898-1899: Some Letters of Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal and Prince Karl Schwarzenberg," *Austrian History Yearbook* 19-20, part 1 (1983-1984): 155-188. The relevant letters in the original German are appended. They are all printed in Rutkowski, part 1.

²⁵ Allmayer-Beck, "Die Träger der staatlichen Macht," 266, 269; On the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners and Feudal Conservatives see Lothar Höbelt, "'Verfassungstreue' und 'Feudale': Die beiden österreichischen Adelsparteien 1861-1918," *Études Danubiennes* 7/2 (1991): 103-114. See also Johann Christoph Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus in Österreich. Konservative Schriftenreihe*, vol. 4 (Munich, 1959), 49, 56-61; and Harald Bachmann, *Joseph Maria Baernreither (1845-1925): Der Werdegang eines altösterreichischen Ministers und Sozialpolitikers* (Neustadt a. d. Aisch, 1977), 45-46, 149-156.

aristocrats developed surprisingly strong pro-German feelings, confounding the accepted view of the Bohemian aristocracy as having had a nonnational or supranational outlook. One of their leaders, Count Oswald Thun-Salm, wrote to Count Franz Thun-Hohenstein, the Feudal Conservative Large Landowners leader who became Austrian prime minister in 1898 and in 1901 Oswald Thun's brother-in-law, that he (Thun-Salm) and his group would never "deny their German nationality."²⁶

The outlook of the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners overlapped with the governmental conservatism that helped shape Aehrenthal's adult political consciousness and that of the imperial bureaucracy, the diplomatic corps, and the army. This branch of conservatism was rooted in eighteenth-century enlightened absolutist principles of legitimacy and authority. Governmental conservatives viewed the state as a German-led, centralized, and authoritarian welfare state that functioned as a mechanism to preserve a social and national balance favorable to dynastic independence and the Great Power position of the monarchy.²⁷ These views corresponded with the neoabsolutist character and "corporate (*ständisch*) structure of the joint structures of the unified state" after 1867.²⁸

Historically, governmental conservatism was associated with a tendency toward intervention at home and abroad. The external expression of this interventionist tendency in the first half of the nineteenth century was manifest in calls to intervene abroad to maintain the monarchical principles of legitimacy and authority.²⁹ By the beginning of the twentieth century, such calls had lost much of their meaning, but the expression of the tendency was still present in Aehrenthal's attempts as ambassador to St. Petersburg to bring about an intervention in support of tsarism during the Russian revolution of 1905 and in his plans for the resurrection of the *Dreikaiserbund* (Three Emperors' Alliance) as an international counterrevolutionary alliance in the summer of 1906.³⁰ A second, and much more significant, expression of the interventionist

26 SAD, RAT-H, A-3 XXIII, 727J, C-III/I/9, Oswald Thun-Salm to Franz Thun-Hohenstein, 9 March 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 371). On the nationalist attitudes of the Bohemian aristocracy see Solomon Wank, "Some Reflections on Aristocrats and Nationalism in Bohemia 1861-1899," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 20/1-2 (1993): 21-34.

27 Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus in Österreich*, 25-32.

28 Hans Mommsen, "Die Rückwirkung des Ausgleiches mit Ungarn auf die zisleithanische Verfassungsfrage," in Anton Vantuch and Ludovit Holotik, eds., *Der Österreichisch-Ungarische Ausgleich 1867* (Bratislava, 1971), 355. See also Otto Brunner, "Das Haus Habsburg und die Donaumonarchie," *Südost-Forschungen* 14 (1955): 126, 129-130, and Peter Hanák, "Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: Preponderancy or Dependency," *Austrian History Yearbook* 3, part 1 (1967): 288-294.

29 Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus in Österreich*, 26.

30 See chapters 5 and 6 below.

tendency at the beginning of the twentieth century manifested itself in attempts to prevent the reorganization of the Balkan peninsula along nationalist lines in a manner detrimental to the Habsburg Empire. Ideas on how that might be done characterized all of Aehrenthal's memoranda until 1909.³¹

Internally, the interventionist tendency was characterized by calls for a "strong man," a *coup d'état* from above, or a return to monarchical absolutism as a way of cutting through internal politics and carrying out reforms.³² All of these political options are visible in Aehrenthal's plans and activities in the crisis years 1897–1900.³³ By the turn of the century, however, these political tendencies were not limited to governmental conservatives alone. They characterized the political thinking of the Austrian aristocracy in general and of many bourgeois German–Austrian liberals as well, a rather paradoxical political turn for the latter, whose forebears had struggled to convert the monarchical-absolutist state into a constitutional one.³⁴

In the mature Aehrenthal's governmental conservative approach to politics, preeminence was given to the monarchical principle. Parliament had no intrinsic value as a political institution. However, a residual commitment to Old Liberal ideas can be seen in his idea of a manipulated parliamentary system based on a restricted franchise and constrained by the existence of absolutist monarchical prerogatives. Such a parliamentary system would be useful for providing sociopolitical support for policies bolstering the monarchical idea and for relieving the emperor of the burden of responsibility for the failure to resolve political and nationality problems. A minimal parliamentary system in Austria was necessary also for relations with Hungary. These political attitudes and values are clearly seen in Aehrenthal's plans to resolve the political crisis in Austria at the end of the century. He emphasized the need to find a prime minister who would "place his head on the block" and a cabinet that would take "the odium upon itself" of settling the compromise with Hungary

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus in Österreich*, 26.

³³ See chapters 5 and 6 below.

³⁴ In his unfinished political analysis of the Habsburg Monarchy's downfall, Josef Redlich writes, "The German idea of Austria, which strove irresistibly to preserve the political hegemony of the German national element ... [led] to the complete inward identification of the German–Austrian with the historical military and authoritarian state (*Macht- und Obrighkeitsstaat*) of the dynasty, with the state that Maria Theresa and Joseph II constructed on the fundamental principle of the most rigid centralism." Redlich, *Das österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1920, 1926), 1: pt. 1, 151, 173. Similar conclusions are contained in Ernst Bruckmüller, *Nation Österreich: Sozialhistorische Aspekte ihrer Entwicklung*. Studien zu Politik und Verwaltung, vol. 4 (Vienna–Cologne–Graz, 1984), 146–151, 185, 205, and Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1918*, 2 vols. (New York, 1950), 1: 51–58.

and removing the "main stumbling blocks" to the resolution of the Czech-German language conflict.³⁵

The flavor of Aehrenthal's attitude toward parliament is succinctly expressed in a letter to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg, in which Aehrenthal reported on an audience with the emperor:

I did not hold back my view that it appeared high time to break with the discredited parliamentary system. The emperor enthusiastically agreed. As stated, everything would become simpler if only one were not compelled to conclude the compromise [with Hungary] in a parliamentary way. Conditions in France prove that not only we suffer from parliamentary decay.³⁶

After 1900, Aehrenthal's depreciation of parliamentary institutions became more marked. "The strength of the monarchy," he said to Joseph Redlich in 1909, "does not lie in parliament but in the dynasty, the army, and the bureaucracy."³⁷

Although sharing the German orientation of his father and the Constitutionally Loyal nobles, Aehrenthal's governmental conservatism and the balancing of social and national forces that was its objective led him to a seemingly more flexible approach to the nationalities question. Furthermore, as a diplomat who spent a good deal of time outside Bohemia, he was less exposed to the pressures of the day-to-day struggle between Czechs and Germans. Therefore, he remained more optimistic about a solution to the nationalities question than his father and his Bohemian friends and relatives. Among his peers, Aehrenthal urged the need for compromise and consideration of the needs of the empire as a whole. He counseled his father and the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners Party to take the position of a "*Staatspartei*" (state party) and not a "*Nationalpartei*" (national party) and to be flexible on the question of concessions to the Czechs.³⁸

The position on the nationalities question that Aehrenthal held throughout his life was clearly expressed in a letter to his father in August 1880. The letter was written in response to his father's report of the anger of the Bohe-

35 SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, Vienna, 12 March 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 498). See also chapter 6 below.

36 Ibid., Bucharest, 24 January 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 351). The reference to France is to the political turmoil created by the Dreyfus affair.

37 Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 126, 29 October 1909. Some German-Austrian liberals held the same view. Joseph Maria Baernreither notes in his diary Heinrich Friedjung's assertion that the international position of the monarchy "rests on the dynasty, the army, and the bureaucracy." HHStA, NBa/5, vol. 5, entry of 10 February 1912.

38 See chapter 4 below.

mian-Germans at a law making Czech and German equal as languages of the outer administrative service in Bohemia, i.e., as languages in which officials had to deal with the public. The twenty-six-year-old diplomat coolly admonished his father:

I constantly bear in mind the thought that the fundamental condition of the existence of our monarchy consists in supporting the establishment in Austria of as true a home as possible for the sixteen million Slavs, as far as that is compatible with the unified state. If that is not done, they [the Slavs] will look outward, and what might be expected then I need not enlarge upon further. I fear that the leaders of the Liberal Party (*Verfassungspartei*) reckon too little, and even that out of ignorance, with the great Slav movement. The latter can be solved in our favor, but can also turn against us.³⁹

Admirable as Aehrenthal's conciliatory principle of national justice for the Slavs was, the restriction that he placed on its application weakened its efficacy as a solution to the nationalities problem. A home for the Slavs in the monarchy that would be compatible with a unified empire as conceived by Aehrenthal would hardly satisfy their national aspirations.⁴⁰

In general, Aehrenthal's view of the nationalities conflict prevented him from appreciating the force and impact of nationalism as the ideological dimension of the processes of social change associated with the growth of modern capitalism.⁴¹ At best, nationalism was, for Aehrenthal, primarily a cultural idea; at worst, which is the way he often thought of it, nationalism was a form of mass hysteria, "a serious symptom of degeneration that attracts ever widening circles among the lower social orders."⁴²

³⁹ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 1 August 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 192–193; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 5). For a brief survey of the development of the language conflict during the era of prime minister Count Eduard Taaffe (1879–1893) see Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 1: 200–205.

⁴⁰ See chapter 6 below.

⁴¹ The most comprehensive work on the growth of nationalism in the Habsburg Monarchy is *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 3: *Die Völker des Reiches*, Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, eds., 2 parts (Vienna, 1980). See the review of the volumes by Solomon Wank, "The Growth of Nationalism in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1918: Review Essay," *East Central Europe* 19 (1983): 165–179.

⁴² SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 23 August 1883 (Adlgasser, 1: 274–275; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 17).

The Influence of Kálnoky's Ideas

Aehrenthal's view of the nationalities question in 1880 already reveals the influence of his patron, Count Gustav Kálnoky, whom he met when the latter took over the St. Petersburg embassy in July 1879. The relationship between the two men will be discussed later. Here it is pointed out that with regard to the development of Aehrenthal's political ideas, as in other matters related to his career, "without Kálnoky it is difficult to understand Aehrenthal."⁴³ Several of Kálnoky's ideas on the monarchy's internal problems and how to surmount them, as Aehrenthal's letters and memoranda show, made a lasting impression on the young attaché. But Aehrenthal's mind was not simply an empty vessel into which Kálnoky poured his thoughts. If Kálnoky's ideas were attractive to Aehrenthal, it was because they were fundamentally similar to his own. Before he met Kálnoky, Aehrenthal was convinced that the monarchy was a historical necessity, and he believed in the dynastic principle and the *Gesamtstaatsidee* (idea of a unified state) that required a special position for the Germans. Kálnoky's exposition of his ideas therefore struck a sympathetic chord in his young protégé. What Aehrenthal got from Kálnoky was a more specific set of political concepts that incorporated his own ideas and feelings. Once formed, these concepts guided Aehrenthal's political thought and action, however much a particular idea, such as the indispensability of dualism, for example, later became modified in light of circumstances and experience.

Kálnoky often spoke of the need for an imperial chancellor as a unifying and stabilizing force, and he ruminated over the possibility of the foreign minister slowly acquiring that position in fact, if not in theory.⁴⁴ That Aehrenthal was impressed with these ideas is seen from a letter to his father commenting on his chief's appointment as foreign minister:

43 Franz Zweybrück, "Graf Aehrenthal: Fragmente zu seiner Beurteilung (1912)," in Zweybrück, *Österreichische Essays* (Berlin, 1916), 207. There is no extant biography of Kálnoky, but the following is useful: Walter Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg: Die österreichisch-ungarische Aussenpolitik unter Gustav Graf Kálnoky* (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar, 1993). See also Ernst R. Rutkowski, "Gustav Graf Kálnoky (1832-1898)," *Neue Österreichische Biographie ab 1815*, vol. 15 (Vienna, 1963), 100-112, and Rutkowski, "Gustav Graf Kálnoky von Köröspatak: Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von 1881-1895" (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1952).

44 A succinct summary of Kálnoky's ideas on the subject is contained in his letter of 20 October 1879 to the retiring Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, Count Julius Andrassy. A copy of the letter is contained in HHStA, NA/2 (Nachrufe an Kálnoky). As the executor of Kálnoky's papers, after the latter's death in 1898, Aehrenthal had access to this and other documents. On the letter to Andrassy see also Julius Wertheimer, *Graf Julius Andrassy: Sein Leben und seine Zeit*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1910-1913), 3: 319-320.

I am not in any way concealing from myself that his position will be a very difficult one, especially as far as internal affairs are concerned. However, I am confident that his great statesmanly ability ... will enable him to remove these difficulties and assume that position which is fitting for a minister of foreign affairs, namely that of an imperial chancellor, if not *de jure*, then at least *de facto*.⁴⁵

This view of the role of a Habsburg foreign minister lay behind Aehrenthal's later conflict with Gołuchowski and his own conception of his political role as foreign minister.⁴⁶

The idea that especially implanted itself in the young diplomat's mind was Kálnoky's conception of the way in which foreign policy could provide the *raison d'être* for the unity of the Habsburg lands that was internally lacking. Kálnoky derived his belief in the need for a chancellor from the need for a Great Power policy that was a "*conditio sine qua non*" for the survival of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy: "For a Great Power policy ... a strong common supreme direction is indispensable...as a permanent constitutional institution. We need the office of imperial chancellor."⁴⁷

Kálnoky's thinking in this regard betrays his underlying uneasiness, which was shared by Aehrenthal and other members of the Habsburg ruling elite, that the Habsburg Monarchy was an inorganic historical entity. According to Kálnoky, the conduct of foreign policy, one of the few matters common to both halves of the monarchy, could create a greater internal unity by providing the heterogeneous national components with a powerful common political concept and with goals that would transcend internal national and political divisions: "In the absence of an impulse toward a common goal, of a powerful political concept that would keep the various heterogeneous elements in constant motion, a putrefying stagnation would set in, which could lead to decomposition."⁴⁸

Aehrenthal clearly expressed this idea in a memorandum that he sent to Gołuchowski in December 1898, shortly before he left to take up his post as ambassador to Russia.⁴⁹ As foreign minister, he sought to put the idea into practice with his policy of action, most notably the Sanjak of Novibazar Railroad project and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁰

Kálnoky's ideas about the need for a chancellor as a unifying political authority and the role of foreign policy in providing meaning for the Habsburg

⁴⁵ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 24 November 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 235–236; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 12).

⁴⁶ See chapters 5 and 6 below.

⁴⁷ Kálnoky to Andrassy, 20 October 1879 (see n. 44 above).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ See chapter 5 below.

⁵⁰ See chapter 10 in volume two of this biography, in preparation.

Monarchy's existence were linked to his unequivocal support for dualism, which he saw as a major factor in allowing the monarchy to reappear on the European scene as a respectable power only a few years after the debacle of the defeat by Prussia at Königgrätz (Sadowa) in 1866. Kálnoky's thinking in this regard found clear expression in a memorandum on the effect of the nationalities question on foreign policy composed in the mid 1880s.⁵¹ We do not know whether Aehrenthal read the memorandum before 1898, when, after Kálnoky's death in that year, his brother Count Alexander Kálnoky gave it to him. We do know that Aehrenthal and Kálnoky had a very close relationship. We may presume therefore that the ideas contained in the memorandum were not unfamiliar to Aehrenthal. Indeed, traces of these ideas can be found in letters and memoranda written at different times in his career.⁵²

Three assumptions underlie Kálnoky's views. First, there is an "indissoluble connection" between foreign and internal questions. Second, "all freedom of decision in foreign affairs is conditioned by internal power and strength." Third, "Since the time when the Habsburg territorial possessions were first united, the monarchy has developed more in the sense of a power (*Macht*) than in the sense of a state (*Staat*). Power and purpose in external matters were more recognizable than its internal purpose as a state."⁵³

From these assumptions, Kálnoky concluded that the *raison d'être* of the unified monarchy was its ability to pursue a Great Power policy. Therefore it was necessary that domestic political power be in the hands of those governing oligarchies whose interests were most clearly tied to the preservation of the monarchy as a great power. After the Compromise of 1867, that meant the Magyars and the Germans.

The Magyars, Kálnoky held, had the greatest interest in the preservation of the dualistic structure of the empire. Despite its limitations, the Compro-

51 HHStA, PA/XL (Intern 1848–1918)/316 (Kopien von Denkschriften 1871–1911), *Memorandum: Die Nationalitäten-Frage in Österreich-Ungarn in ihrer Rückwirkung auf die äussere Politik der Monarchie* (Rutkowski, 1: No. 395). Rutkowski gives 1888 as the probable year of the memorandum's composition. However, Aehrenthal, in a memorandum to Gołuchowski at the end of 1898, states that the memorandum originated "at the beginning of the Taaffe era in the 1880s." Aehrenthal's memorandum is printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 464. A copy of Kálnoky's memorandum in the Friedjung papers bears the date 1885 (Stb/HS, NF/5). The elections of 1885 in Austria heralded a sharp rise in both Czech and German nationalism, to which Kálnoky's memorandum might have been a response. The precise date is not really crucial. Kálnoky and Aehrenthal remained apprehensive about Count Taaffe's nationality policies until the latter's resignation in 1893. The memorandum is cited and discussed in Solomon Wank, "Foreign Policy and the Nationality Problem in Austria-Hungary, 1867–1914," *Austrian History Yearbook* 3, part 3 (1967): 38–43.

52 See especially the memoranda written in 1898, at the height of the Badeni language crisis, discussed in chapters 5 and 6 below.

53 Kálnoky, *Memorandum: Die Nationalitäten-Frage in Österreich-Ungarn* (see n. 51 above).

mise of 1867 represented a considerable victory for Magyar national aims. The Magyars had no national support beyond the frontiers of the monarchy; alone, they would be a weak and minor power. Even more important for preventing the dissolution of the Danubian Monarchy was the attitude of the Germans, who, according to Kálnoky, were the real "state-preserving" element in the monarchy and the strongest supporters of the idea of a unified state. An internal policy that the Germans believed threatened their national interests would lead to their renunciation of that idea.

In Kálnoky's view, Count Eduard Taaffe, the Austrian prime minister (1879–1893), courted the danger of alienating the German–Austrians from the unified state idea by his policy of concessions to the Czechs at the expense of the Germans.⁵⁴ Kálnoky warned that the Germans of Austria were not immune to irredentism. The transformation of the German–Austrian Liberal Party from a state party to a German national party was a warning sign. While Bismarck had no interest in the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, a liberal-minded German national government in the future might pursue a different policy, one more sympathetic to the incorporation of the German–Austrians. The elimination of the Germans would spell the end of the monarchy. From the above considerations, Kálnoky concluded,

The governance of the empire, which is based, on the one hand, on that nationality [the Magyars] whose interests are most securely tied to its continued existence and, on the other, on that nationality [the Germans] whose moral defection would involve the question of the very existence of the monarchy, is the logical justification for the dualistic system from the standpoint of foreign policy.⁵⁵

If Aehrenthal, as Joseph Maria Baernreither states, "always casts his influence with the emperor on the side of the Germans,"⁵⁶ it was because, like Kálnoky, he saw in their continuation as a *Staatspartei* a condition of the monarchy's continued existence. In a letter to his father, Aehrenthal ruefully took note of the formation of a German national party in 1881, which he saw as weakening the Liberal Party, heretofore a representative of a moderate German national consciousness that placed the interests of the state above those of nationality:

I consider the formation of a German national party a mistake, which its founders will soon regret. Of course, I consider it impossible that the Large Landowners

⁵⁴ On Taaffe's policies see William A. Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring, 1879–1893* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1965). See also chapter 4 below.

⁵⁵ Kálnoky, *Memorandum: Die Nationalitäten-Frage in Österreich-Ungarn* (see n. 51 above).

⁵⁶ Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 33.

Party, which has other than exclusively national interests to represent, should cooperate with this party in the future. Sooner or later a partial schism in the party will be unavoidable, a result that could bring joy only to the opponents of the Liberal Party (*Verfassungspartei*).⁵⁷

Kálnoky was not unaware that the predominance of the Magyars and the Germans could lead to an intensification of nationalism among the other nationalities. Austria-Hungary, Kálnoky observed, was surrounded by nationally homogeneous states that would like to strengthen themselves by incorporating Habsburg territories inhabited by their co-nationals. According to Kálnoky, nothing could weaken the monarchy internally or restrict its freedom of decision externally more than even a "moral gravitation" of individual ethnic groups to nationalist centers that lay beyond the borders of Austria-Hungary. He warned that the greater the support that any one Austro-Hungarian nationality found outside the monarchy, "the quicker would an internal question be transformed into an external one." To avert this danger, Kálnoky called for an internal policy of justice for the Slavs and reconciliation between the nationalities.⁵⁸ He does not say, however, how an internal policy aimed at reconciling the nationalities could be carried out without infringing on the interests of the Magyars and Germans. Taaffe, in fact, sought to do just what Kálnoky prescribed — reconcile the non-German nationalities to the established sociopolitical order through meeting some of their national demands⁵⁹ — and both Kálnoky and Aehrenthal opposed him because his concessions would have stimulated the nationalism of the Germans in Austria.⁶⁰ The defensive and anxious tone of Kálnoky's memorandum reveals the fundamental incompatibility between the principle of nationality and the dynastic-monarchical principle that by the mid 1880s led to concern over the Danubian Monarchy's viability. Kálnoky himself pointed that out,

In the ebb and flow of the sentiments of people, national currents are now predominant. National dynasties are beginning to cast their shadows on historical-political dynasties in a manner similar to that of national states on the multinational state.⁶¹

Faced with the inbuilt tension between the requirements of preserving the Habsburg Monarchy as a Great Power and the nationality aspirations of the Slavs in it, Kálnoky fell back on a solution more in keeping with the traditions of the Habsburg imperial ruling elite. He called for a restoration of the dynastic con-

57 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 7 October 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 230-232; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 9).

58 Kálnoky, *Memorandum: Die Nationalitäten-Frage in Österreich-Ungarn* (see n. 51 above).

59 Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 55.

60 See chapter 4 for Aehrenthal's opposition to the Taaffe government.

61 Kálnoky, *Memorandum: Die Nationalitäten-Frage in Österreich-Ungarn* (see n. 51 above).

cept to its "old purity and genuineness."⁶² At times, Aehrenthal also grasped at the strengthening of the dynastic idea as a way out of the impasse between the monarchical principle and the nationality principle. Writing to his father about a visit of Emperor Francis Joseph to the Bohemian industrial fair in Prague and to the northern Bohemian city of Reichenberg/Liberec in the fall of 1892, Aehrenthal noted the warmth with which the emperor had been received and commented that while the visit could not end the longstanding Czech-German conflict, "what has been achieved is the strengthening of the dynastic idea — a rapprochement between the sovereign and people — German as well as Czech, and this would be a result that in our democratic age cannot be valued highly enough."⁶³ Some members of the Habsburg political elite, however, had doubts that the monarchical tie was enough to bind the monarchy together. Aehrenthal's friend, Major (later General) Eduard von Klepsch, longtime Austro-Hungarian military attaché at St. Petersburg, wrote to him in 1887: "Only the love of the peoples for the person of the emperor is the bond, *the only one*, that holds Austria together." "That," he felt, "is not good."⁶⁴ In any event, Aehrenthal himself sensed the weakness of dynasticism as a unifying bond when he angrily described the "infamous insults and incitements" of Czech newspapers, after the previously mentioned visit of the emperor, as "downright disgraceful."⁶⁵

Although Kálnoky did not allude to it in his memorandum, Taaffe's nationality policy of reconciling the Slavs to the Habsburg Monarchy by meeting some of their national demands endangered Austria-Hungary's alliance with Germany, on which Kálnoky based his foreign policy. For German statesmen, from Bismarck onward, only an Austria-Hungary in which the Magyars and Germans exercised a predominant influence could be a reliable ally.⁶⁶ In 1915, in a memorandum to Vienna, the German government asserted that

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 10 October 1891 (Adlgasser, 1: 484–485; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 96). Aehrenthal failed to mention that most German manufacturers in Bohemia boycotted the fair and that in Reichenberg, the center of German nationalist agitation, the emperor presented an award to the city's mayor. Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 281–283.

⁶⁴ HHStA, NA/2, Klepsch to Aehrenthal, 28 December 1887 (Wank, 1: No. 19). The emphasis is in the original.

⁶⁵ Aehrenthal to his father, 10 October 1891 (same as in n. 63 above).

⁶⁶ On Bismarck's continuous meddling in the domestic affairs of the Habsburg Monarchy, see Bascom Barry Hayes, "The German Reich and the 'Austrian Question', 1871–1914" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1963); *ibid.*, "Bismarck on Austrian Parliamentarianism, 1867–1898," *Austrian History Yearbook* 2 (1966): 55–88, esp. 67–68; and *ibid.*, *Bismarck and Mitteleuropa* (Cranbury, New Jersey, 1994), 198–208 and 254–272. See also Solomon Wank, "The Impact of the Dual Alliance on the Germans in Austria and Vice-Versa," *East Central Europe* 7 (1980): 288–309.

when the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary was concluded in 1879, it was done on the basis of the idea of [Count Julius] Andrassy and [Francis] Deák of Magyar supremacy in Hungary and a corresponding position of the Germans in Austria.⁶⁷

Bismarck and his successors did not hesitate to intervene in support of the German-Austrians, indirectly in the 1880s and more directly in the 1890s, against the Taaffe and Badeni governments in Austria. Yet, while critical of Taaffe's policies because he saw them as pushing the German-Austrians toward radical nationalism, Aehrenthal resented Bismarck's interference in Austria-Hungary's internal affairs. He wrote to his father about an 1886 speech by Bismarck that it "made a deep and unpleasant impression here [Vienna]." Piqued at Bismarck's schoolmasterly tone, Aehrenthal remarked that in the end, "Berlin cannot provide us with a solution as to the kind of internal policy we should pursue. Thank God, we have not sunk that low."⁶⁸ Nevertheless, in his December 1898 memorandum to Gołuchowski, Aehrenthal expressed his fears that a weakening of dualism and the German character of Austria would lead to an end of the alliance with Germany and, possibly, the intervention of the German Empire.⁶⁹ In this regard, the Czechs, by seeking support for their domestic position in Paris and St. Petersburg, for which Aehrenthal contemptuously criticized them for "groveling before Russia,"⁷⁰ were only following the example set by the German-Austrians and Magyars who sought support in Berlin for their domestic positions.⁷¹ The German government certainly cannot be saddled with the responsibility for the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, but Berlin's policy of insisting on Magyar and German supremacy, which it saw as necessary to achieve its aim of preserving Austria-Hungary as a Great

67 The memorandum may be found in Stephan Verosta, "The German Concept of Mitteleuropa 1916-1918 and Its Contemporary Critics," in *The Habsburg Empire in World War I: Essays on the Intellectual, Military, Political, and Economic Aspects of the Habsburg War Effort*, Robert A. Kann, et al., eds. (Boulder, Colorado, 1977), 209-210.

68 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, 30 January 1886 (Adlgasser, 1: 324-325; partially printed in Rutkowski, No. 33). See in general the works by Hayes cited in n. 66 above. On the intervention in the later 1890s see chapter 5 below.

69 Wank, "Varieties of Political Despair," 200. See also chapter 6 below.

70 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 31 October 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 497-499; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 104). On Czech attempts to find support in France and Russia, see John F. N. Bradley, "Czech Nationalism in the Light of French Diplomatic Reports 1867-1914," *Slavonic and East European Review* 42 (December 1963): 38-53, and Bruce M. Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System*. Yale Historical Publications, Miscellany, vol. 111 (New Haven, Connecticut, 1978), 269-278.

71 The same was true for Serbs, Italians, Romanians, and other Habsburg nationalities who also sought support in other states. See Stephan Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen: Heinrich Lammasch, Karl Renner und der Zweibund (1897-1914)* (Vienna, 1971), 191.

Power and a reliable ally, significantly contributed, in a contradictory fashion, to weakening the monarchy's ability to hold itself together.

Attitude Toward the Hungarians

"I am not an enemy of Hungary," Aehrenthal told Heinrich Friedjung in 1906. "Hungary is without question a force (*Kraft*) and why should one complain about that? Such a force should be made useful for the monarchy. A strong Hungary in a strong monarchy; that should be the formula."⁷² That formula became the leitmotif of his thinking about the Hungarian half of the empire regardless of his anger at its government at any one time. Aehrenthal's support for dualism, therefore, was mixed with his anger at what he considered Magyar chauvinism and arrogance that damaged the image of imperial unity and thereby weakened the prestige of the monarchy in international relations. One of the first references to Hungary in his correspondence is a doleful one. Writing to his father from Paris during the negotiations between Austria and Hungary for the renewal of the *Ausgleich* in 1877, Aehrenthal remarked,

I am following with the greatest interest the unfortunately very sad negotiations on the bank question. The Hungarians are real V.... There is nothing further left than a personal union or a *Staatsstreich* [*coup d'état*], both very unpleasant things.⁷³

In 1886, Aehrenthal wrote to his father from Budapest, where Kálnoky and he were attending the annual meeting of the delegations: "The Hungarians are as always big children and in addition pronounced chauvinists for whom Hungary is the whole world and everything else a mere trifle."⁷⁴

In response to the near hysterical nationalism stirred up in Hungary by a bill offered in the Hungarian parliament to grant full citizenship to the exiled revolutionary Louis Kossuth, Aehrenthal wrote to his father:

The scandalous events in Hungary have depressed me. It is sad to have to live through the reflex effects of Magyar chauvinism in Russia. I am beginning to believe that the Russian opinion of our fatherland is not quite so wrong.⁷⁵

⁷² Friedjung, 2: 33.

⁷³ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 19 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 81–83). The incomplete word is in the original. It could mean either *Verräter* (traitors) or *Vieher* (brutes).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Budapest, 8 November 1886 (Adlgasser, 1: 362–363; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 43).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 31 October 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 497–499; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 104).

What is more, Aehrenthal saw Hungarian chauvinism feeding national movements in Austria:

What reaction the concessions to the chauvinism of the Hungarians must call forth in Cisleithania, one can see by the pathological development of the national movement there. How can one blame the Czechs for hoping that chauvinism is the way they will obtain something when they see what results those tactics yielded the Hungarians.⁷⁶

The role of the Hungarian government in causing the resignation of Kálnoky in 1895 simply added to Aehrenthal's animosity toward the Magyars.⁷⁷

One of the main reasons Aehrenthal strove so hard for some kind of peace between Czechs and Germans in Bohemia was that with a more stable and united Austria, "more attention could be paid to economic questions and a completely different attitude could be taken towards Hungary."⁷⁸ The idea of checking Hungarian separatism and chauvinism by a stronger Austria is an example of his mechanistic approach to the nationalities question. After 1890, he became increasingly convinced that only the power of the crown could preserve the authority of the state and the unity of the empire:

The crown must energetically put a halt to the insolent separatist tendencies of Hungary and defend its authority once more, not only there but also in Austria. We cannot continue muddling through (*Fortwursteln*) and pasting together.⁷⁹

The evidence of Aehrenthal's early hostility toward the Magyar ruling oligarchy is an antidote to the oversimplified view that Aehrenthal was a pawn for the Hungarians, especially after his marriage in 1902 to the Hungarian countess Paula Széchenyi.⁸⁰ Even after his marriage, he protested vigorously against Magyar insistence, in 1904, on signing certain international treaties in the name of the Hungarian government, and questioned his own suitability for the office of foreign minister because of his sharp differences with the Hungarians.⁸¹ In July 1909, Felix Aehrenthal wrote to Count Oswald Thun-Salm:

76 Ibid., 17 March 1889 (Adlgasser, 1: 426–427; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 55).

77 See chapter 4 below.

78 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 29 April 1889 (Adlgasser, 1: 430–432).

79 Aehrenthal to his father, 31 October 1892 (same as n. 75 above). The word *Fortwursteln* symbolized Count Taaffe's style of government.

80 See Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 52, 92–93, and Pribram, *Austria-Hungary and Great Britain*, 71.

81 See chapter 6 below for the 1904 protest, and chapter 7 in volume 2 of this biography, in

Louis is lamenting over Hungarian conditions...and says that the entire annexation [Bosnia-Herzegovina] crisis together with the threat of war has given him not nearly so much worry as Magyar chauvinism.⁸²

If, as foreign minister, Aehrenthal came to recommend granting some Hungarian nationalist demands, it was only because he had come to the conclusion that without the cooperation of the Magyars the common government could not function and that any attempt to suppress the Magyars by force, as recommended by Archduke Francis Ferdinand, would end with the destruction of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁸³

Differences with the Feudal Conservative Bohemian Nobility

Much of Aehrenthal's political energy during the 1880s, when he was stationed in Vienna as Kálnoky's right-hand man, was consumed by efforts to heal the split in the Large Landowners Party between the Constitutionally Loyal and Conservative factions. The Conservative nobility are usually referred to as Feudal Conservatives, the name given them by their opponents and which is used here. After a lapse in the early 1890s, these efforts were renewed during the crisis that followed the issuance of the Badeni language ordinances in 1897. Therefore, a sketch of the main lines of the political thought of the Feudal Conservative Large Landowners is both necessary and relevant as a context for Aehrenthal's political values and ideas and those of the aristocracy as a whole at the beginning of the twentieth century.

To Feudal Conservatives such as Prince Karl Schwarzenberg and Count (after 1911 Prince) Franz Thun-Hohenstein, the Constitutionally Loyal nobility were considered something akin to "traitors" to their class (*Stand*), although this did not seriously disrupt their social relations, even if at times relations between members of the two noble parties became strained. The historian and journalist Heinrich Friedjung reports that the prominent Constitutionally Loyal party member Prince Max Egon Fürstenberg told him that "the opposition of the two parties is now so great that if Fürstenberg gives a dinner party in Prague, he invites only members of one party. Otherwise, even after

preparation, on his recommending against his appointment as foreign minister and his conflict with Francis Ferdinand over treatment of Hungary. See also Wank, "The Archduke and Aehrenthal," 87-93.

⁸² SAK, RAT-S/27, Felix Aehrenthal to Oswald Thun-Salm, 1 July 1909.

⁸³ See Wank, "The Archduke and Aehrenthal," 87-93. For more on Aehrenthal and the Magyars see chapter 6 below and chapter 8 in volume two of this biography, in preparation.

drinking a moderate amount of wine, a vehement political argument begins and the guests become pig-headed."⁸⁴

Originally, the political and social thought of the Conservative nobility had as its objective the reconstruction of the noble intermediary role, and it projected social-ethical ideals aimed at raising the cultural level of the people. By the 1860s, however, the political organization of the Feudal Conservative nobility became, like the Constitutionally Loyal nobility, an upper class — a very exclusive one to be sure — within the bourgeois political world. Drawing on feudal concepts of local power and aristocratic class interests, the Feudal Conservatives saw the best protection for conservative-aristocratic social and economic interests in a federalist political organization based on historical-territorial rights and a corporate social structure.⁸⁵ In defense of their values and class interests, the Feudal Conservatives championed the idea of Bohemian (and therefore Czech) historical-constitutional rights — the Bohemian *Staatsrecht* (state rights) — and the moderate nationalism of the Old Czechs (National Party).⁸⁶ Like its German-Austrian liberal counterpart, the Old Czech party was really a predemocratic party of dignitaries (*Honoratioren*), which inclined it toward an alliance with the Conservative nobility.⁸⁷

At heart, the majority of the Feudal Conservatives had little sympathy for the nationalist aspirations of the Czech people. The patriotism of the Conservative nobility in Bohemia was really closer to the *Landespatriotismus* (provincial patriotism) of the eighteenth century than to that inherent in modern nationalism.⁸⁸ The autonomy for the Czech lands that the Feudal Conserva-

84 Friedjung, 1: 244. The conversation took place at the end of March 1899. In the same interview, Prince Fürstenberg talked about his personal relations with Count Heinrich Clam-Martinic, a leader of the Conservative group and a long-time friend, whom he told after a heated political argument: "Dear Heinrich, why should our friendship suffer? We have so many common interests, so let us leave politics alone!" (Ibid., 245).

85 See Höbelt, "'Verfassungstreue' und 'Feudale';" Eagle Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 26–38; Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus in Österreich*, 45–55; and ibid., "Die Träger der staatlichen Macht," 267; See also Christoph Thienen-Adlerflycht, *Graf Leo Thun im Vormärz: Grundlagen des böhmischen Konservatismus im Kaisertum Österreich*. Veröffentlichungen des Österreichischen Ost- und Südosteuropainstituts, vol. 6 (Graz–Vienna–Cologne, 1967). For what follows, I have drawn on my article "Aristocrats and Politics in Austria, 1898–1899."

86 Höbelt, "'Verfassungstreue' und 'Feudale,'" 105–110; Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus in Österreich*, 53; and H. Gordon Skilling, "The Politics of the Czech Eighties," in Peter Brock and Skilling, eds., *The Czech Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto, 1970), 260–261, 265–273.

87 Skilling, "The Politics of the Czech Eighties," 265–266, 274–275, and Stanley B. Winters, "The Young Czech Party (1864–1914): An Appraisal," *Slavic Review* 26 (September 1969): 434.

88 Skilling, "The Politics of the Czech Eighties," 265–266; and Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus*.

tives sought would have left them and their subordinate upper-middle-class Old Czech allies in control of the kingdom.⁸⁹ Therefore, both the Feudal Conservatives and the Old Czechs opposed the nationalist movement of the Young Czechs (National Liberal Party), who coupled autonomy for Bohemia with a demand for a democratic franchise.⁹⁰ In 1889, the Feudal Conservative leader, Count Karl Buquoy, wrote to Aehrenthal, "the Young Czechs are a factor which we cannot and do not want to be dependent upon and which we constantly must regard as opponents."⁹¹ Unlike the Constitutionally Loyal Large landowners, who came to see themselves as a German party, the Feudal Conservative nobility never identified itself as a Czech party. By the end of the nineteenth century, Feudal Conservative principles had become so attenuated that the support of the Feudalists for the Bohemian *Staatsrecht* "seemed to represent little more than a claim for eventual revision [of the political system] in the form of a broadened autonomy of the kingdoms and lands, [which] was a far cry from restoration of the Bohemian state rights."⁹²

Until the collapse of the monarchy, the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners held fast to the principle of centralism, and the Feudal Conservatives held to that of federalism, but in practice, except for a more reactionary tone on the part of the Feudal Conservative spokesmen, it became scarcely possible to distinguish between the two noble factions.⁹³ So, for example, aristocrats from both factions, including Aehrenthal (until 1907) and the leading Feudal Conservative Prince Karl Schwarzenberg, were counted among the members of Archduke Francis Ferdinand's entourage.⁹⁴ If anything, Feudal Conservatives went further than Aehrenthal and the Constitutionally Loyal nobility in their contempt for parliamentary institutions and constitutional protections of civil and political liberties.

Replying to a letter from Aehrenthal at the beginning of 1898,⁹⁵ in which Aehrenthal had voiced his misgivings about parliamentary government, the Feudal Conservative Prince Karl Schwarzenberg wrote,

mus in Österreich, 53. See also Bruckmüller, *Nation Österreich*, 57–62 ("Landesbewusstsein und Konservatismus").

⁸⁹ Winters, "The Young Czech Party," 431.

⁹⁰ Skilling, "The Politics of the Czech Eighties," 274–275.

⁹¹ HHStA, NA/1, Karl Buquoy to Aehrenthal, Prague, 8 February 1889.

⁹² Skilling, "The Politics of the Czech Eighties," 274–275.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 260, and Allmayer-Beck, "Die Träger der staatlichen Macht," 26.

⁹⁴ Rudolf Kiszling, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand von Österreich-Este* (Graz–Cologne, 1953), 94, 222. Francis Ferdinand "made little distinction between the Czech-oriented 'conservatives' and the German-minded 'constitutional loyalists'." *Ibid.*, 222.

⁹⁵ See n. 24 above.

The increasing awareness that the parliamentary form of government has outlived its usefulness can cause satisfaction for us true conservatives if this awareness also is accompanied by a firm will and perseverance that will not allow itself to become weakened by difficulties that are certain to arise. A mere temporary attempt or a possible change of the governmental system which would not include almost every area of administration would easily lead to most serious consequences. The so-called individual freedoms must be curtailed. People who think that the wheel cannot be turned back would scarcely be suitable [as political leaders].... In my opinion, Austria can no longer be held together in any other way than by a modernized form of absolutism with public control of the state's finances.⁹⁶

The absolutist ethos of Schwarzenberg's views were typical of the political thinking of Archduke Francis Ferdinand's closest advisers. Among the latter, the idea of a "modernized form of absolutism" had as its goal the deinstitutionalization of politics, that is, the elimination of political parties and parliamentary negotiation as a way of managing society. In place of a party-based system of politics, Francis Ferdinand's advisers thought in terms of a refurbished form of late-eighteenth-century German-led Habsburg administrative centralism exalting the power of the crown and a corporate-aristocratic vision of a "hierarchically integrated, but socially compartmentalized, world."⁹⁷

Aehrenthal and the Constitutionally Loyal nobility disagreed with the Feudal Conservatives on how to deal with the nationality question, but both groups of aristocrats were fundamentally unrealistic in their thinking on the matter. Aehrenthal believed that Habsburg unity and the preservation of Austria-Hungary as a Great Power required that the German minority be assured a leading role in the state. The equilibrium of the Habsburg state, he wrote to Schwarzenberg, was dependent on "hitching the Germans to the Austrian wagon of state again" and giving them a "pace-setting role."⁹⁸ Prince Schwarzenberg, the Feudal Conservative leader, pointed out that such a role

96 HHStA, NA/4, Schwarzenberg to Aehrenthal, Prague, 3 February 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 357). Count Anton Wolkenstein, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Paris, "looked forward with the greatest interest...to the decomposition of the abstract idea of parliamentary government." HHStA, NA/4, Wolkenstein to Aehrenthal, Paris, 20 December 1897 (Wank, 1: No. 98).

97 For brief but incisive comments on the political ideas of the Francis Ferdinand circle see John W. Boyer, "The End of an Old Regime: Visions of Political Reform in Late Imperial Austria," *Journal of Modern History* 58 (March 1986): 183–187, 186 for the quotation. The most recent summary of the archduke's political plans is Robert A. Kann, *Franz Ferdinand Studien*. Veröffentlichungen des Österreichischen Ost- und Südosteuropainstituts, vol. 10 (Vienna–Munich, 1976), 26–46.

98 SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, St. Petersburg, 2 September 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 560).

contradicted "a numerically founded electoral principle." Schwarzenberg recommended that "for our domestic calm, it might perhaps be conducive if, as a legal subject, one would place more emphasis on territory than on language and nationality (*Nation*)."⁹⁹ Given the Habsburg Monarchy's internal and external weakness, Schwarzenberg deemed it wisest to eschew any policy based on nationality considerations.

Aehrenthal and Schwarzenberg agreed on stressing the personal role of the monarch over institutions as the most significant political factor. In a letter to Aehrenthal in 1899, Schwarzenberg wrote,

Now as before, the only common and unifying political factor for us is the dynastic and monarchical. In order to show its vitality, it must command internally and act externally, however, not from a national standpoint, but with emphasis on the economy.¹⁰⁰

Schwarzenberg's views contain the same dilemmas as Aehrenthal's. How could an "internally and externally" weak Austria-Hungary act in a commanding way? How could the dynasty and the emperor be effective politically? If they remained neutral and above the fray, as Schwarzenberg recommended, they would be separated from the vital political forces of the time. Yet, by entering the lists in favor of the Germans, as Aehrenthal urged, the emperor would have undermined his neutrality and thereby his status as a unifying symbol.

In the end, the nobility in Bohemia and Austria, unable to exercise political power on its own, fell back to a position that accorded with its historical tradition. Increasingly, the nobility sought protection under the "wings of the royal authority" and became advocates of an authoritarian political course to preserve the authority of the state.¹⁰¹ The crown became a focal point for aristocratic ideals, the last bulwark for an aristocratic way of life. By the end of the nineteenth century, both the Constitutionally Loyal and Feudal Conservative aristocrats found themselves in the camp of the governmental conservatives. In the conflict between legitimate authority and popular sovereignty, members of both aristocratic political factions, with some exceptions, always chose the side of royal absolutism and saw their place "at the foot of the throne."¹⁰² Ultimately, the salvation of the monarchy lay in creating an image of impe-

⁹⁹ HHStA, NA/3, Schwarzenberg to Aehrenthal, St. Thoma near Krumau/Český Krumlov, 4 May 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 528).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Allmayer-Beck, "Die Träger der staatlichen Macht," 267.

¹⁰² Ibid.

rial vitality that would not so much solve the domestic conflicts as transcend them.

The material for creating that image of imperial vitality was in the area of foreign policy. Responding to a memorandum by Aehrenthal in 1898 calling for an active Balkan policy as a way of surmounting domestic conflicts,¹⁰³ Schwarzenberg wrote,

It is for you diplomats to find the time and place where the state achieves vitality and whereby it in pursuit of economic interest, in pursuit of the only healthy and realistic policy, could divert its thoughts from the Gordian knot of internal questions. Bismarck did not pull Prussia and Germany out of the mire through internal tricks (*Künste*), but immediately and initially through foreign activity. It is for you to indicate points of view which posit a stimulating interest that calls forth the feeling of the united Austrian (*Gesamt-Österreich*) ... In short, we need new things of interest for everyone. Then people will cease of their own accord to quarrel. ... What is correct is that internal politics must adjust to foreign [policy] as expressing the life and strength of the state and that the reverse is an empty school phrase.¹⁰⁴

The reference in Schwarzenberg's letter to Bismarck is typical of the call for a "strong man" to lift Austria out of the political mire that characterized the political thought of the ruling elite. Having just finished reading Bismarck's memoirs, he observed that what Bismarck had to say about Prussia before 1860 "applies almost to the word to our conditions."¹⁰⁵ His final words to Aehrenthal, the newly appointed ambassador to Russia, were, "the road through St. Petersburg may make you our Bismarck."¹⁰⁶

The spirit of Schwarzenberg's letter found its embodiment in the image of strength and vitality Aehrenthal strove to project through his foreign policy in his first two years as foreign minister.¹⁰⁷

The aftermath of the annexation crisis of 1908–1909 eventually revealed to Aehrenthal how dangerous it was to the life of the monarchy to confuse the image with the reality. That awareness was registered in the more cautious policy he pursued until his death in 1912.¹⁰⁸ Ironically, in later rejecting

103 The reference is to Aehrenthal's memorandum of 31 December 1898 addressed to Goltzowski: *Unser Verhältnis zu Russland, betrachtet vom Gesichtspunkte der inneren und äusseren Politik der Monarchie* (Rutkowski, 1: No. 464). It is discussed in chapters 5 and 6 below.

104 Schwarzenberg to Aehrenthal, 4 May 1899 (same as n. 99 above).

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 See chapters 10 and 11 of volume 2 of this biography, in preparation.

108 See chapters 12 and 13 of volume 2 of this biography, in preparation.

politically adventurist ideas of annexing Serbia in whole or in part along with an aggressive and expansionist policy in the Balkans as advocated by chief of staff General Conrad von Hötzendorf and members of Archduke Francis Ferdinand's entourage, Aehrenthal rejected ideas with which he had been associated for over a decade and that in 1899 had earned him a rebuke from Gołuchowski for political adventurism.¹⁰⁹

Political Anxiety and Anti-Semitism

While the content of Aehrenthal's sociopolitical outlook remained more or less consistent throughout his adult life, the tone and temper of his political thought and action changed in accordance with the increasing sharpness of the social conflicts generated by the economic depression that began in 1873. In a real sense, Aehrenthal's entire adult life was lived in a period of developing internal crisis. The crash of 1873 led to a collapse of faith in liberal economic norms, which was soon followed by a loss of faith in liberal social and political values.¹¹⁰ Those groups hit hardest by the crash — petty bourgeois artisans and shopkeepers, small and middling farmers, and industrial workers — sought protection in collective action and institutions associated with nationalism, socialism, and democracy.¹¹¹ As early as 1882, Aehrenthal saw in such social and political movements "socialist or rather terrorist elements" that were rising to challenge conservative interests.¹¹²

At the time that Aehrenthal entered the diplomatic corps in 1877, the political organizations of the working and lower middle classes were in an embryonic state; they lacked the strength and cohesion that they would later

¹⁰⁹ See the exchange between Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski on Aehrenthal's memorandum of 31 December 1898 (see n. 103 above) in chapter 5 below.

¹¹⁰ The literature on the subject is large. The following relate to Central Europe in general and Austria in particular: Peter G. J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (New York, 1964; revised ed. London, 1988), 18–27, 127–137; Dirk van Arkel, "Antisemitism in Austria" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Leiden, 1966), 34–55; Hans Rosenberg, *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit: Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft und Politik in Mitteleuropa* (Berlin, 1967; new ed. Frankfurt, 1976), 62–78, 88–117; Matis, *Österreichs Wirtschaft*, 324–350, 409–412; Helmut Rumpler, *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa: Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie*. *Österreichische Geschichte*, Herwig Wolfram, ed. (Vienna, 1997), 456–485; Roman Sandgruber, *Ökonomie und Politik: Österreichische Wirtschaftsgeschichte vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*. *Österreichische Geschichte*, Herwig Wolfram, ed. (Vienna, 1995), 233–251.

¹¹¹ See the works cited in the previous footnote.

¹¹² SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 29 August 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 254–255; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 17).

acquire. Therefore, they did not seem as threatening to Aehrenthal as they would later appear. Reform in Austria and elsewhere seemed to be firmly in the hands of high-level bureaucrats and the political representatives of the upper classes. Hence Aehrenthal's political anxiety was relatively low, and his conservatism was moderate and flexible. Within Austria, recognized nationality leaders were relatively restrained, and nationality demands were mainly cultural in nature.¹¹³ These, Aehrenthal believed, could be satisfied without drastically altering the sociopolitical foundations of the dualist state.¹¹⁴

After 1900, the situation changed. "Mankind," Aehrenthal wrote to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg in 1898, "which for close to fifty years was relatively quiet and reasonable, begins to act recently in a crazy manner."¹¹⁵ Aehrenthal's observation about the behavior of "mankind" reflects not only the disruptions sparked by the Badeni language ordinances, but also the fact that by the turn of the century, mass-based socialist, petty-bourgeois, and radical nationalist political parties had gained considerably in strength and organization. In the Habsburg Monarchy, the nationalities conflict merged with radical social and political movements, and Aehrenthal witnessed the growth of the revolutionary movement in Russia. He felt control over events slipping away from traditional centers of power. The impetus for change now coming from below threatened the continuation of the monarchical and aristocratic social order in the Habsburg Monarchy as well as in Russia.¹¹⁶ Therefore, Aehrenthal, along with other aristocrats, experienced heightened political anxiety. He became the arch conservative that we know from numerous contemporary observers and historical studies.¹¹⁷

Archduke Francis Ferdinand as well as other aristocrats shared his fear of revolution.¹¹⁸ In a memorandum to General Baron (1906 Count) Friedrich von Beck, chief of the general staff, in May 1896, the heir to the throne wrote, "The monarchy faces a time of crisis. Revolution is threatening in Hungary and there is mounting separatist nationalist disaffection in the other half of the empire."¹¹⁹ Not only was the army the only reliable protector of the throne

113 See in general Rosenberg, *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit*, 78–88, 227–257; Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*, 148–176; and Matis, *Österreichs Wirtschaft*, 342–413. On Austria and Hungary specifically see, among others, May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 193–226, 252–269.

114 See chapter 6 below.

115 SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, Bucharest, 24 January 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 351).

116 See in general May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 305–312, 322–362.

117 See Wank, "Varieties of Political Despair," 203, 207, 221.

118 Ibid., 203–204.

119 Quoted in Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph* (West Lafayette, Indiana, 1976), 129.

and the dynasty, but, continued Francis Ferdinand, "the army's main task is not the defense of the fatherland against an external enemy, but the protection and maintenance of the throne and the dynasty against all internal enemies."¹²⁰ Count Ferdinand Buquoy, a Feudal Conservative aristocrat and sometime minister of agriculture, wrote to Aehrenthal in 1898,

What is to be feared is not the socialist system, for that is in its consequences unattainable and especially untenable in the long run; what is to be feared is only social revolution with or without the sanction of the Socialist leaders.¹²¹

What gave Aehrenthal's political anxiety and feelings of desperation a somewhat frantic quality was the fact, discussed in the previous chapter, that they were fed by the psychological fusion of himself with the Habsburg state and his need to project optimism. This led, on the one hand, to largely unrealistic plans to rescue the monarchy from collapse and, on the other, to counterrevolutionary projects such as the resurrection of the Three Emperors' Alliance;¹²² intervention in the Russian Revolution of 1905;¹²³ opposition to the peace movement, which he equated with socialist and revolutionary movements;¹²⁴ and anti-Semitism as an aspect of conspiratorial explanations of social and political disturbances.

Aehrenthal's movement from a moderate and flexible conservative position to an arch-conservative one is chronicled in his letters to his parents and his reports from Russia. Manifestations of this transition of political temperament with regard to events in Austria-Hungary are given in the next chapter. Here the change will be illustrated and explained by examples drawn from his letters and related to events in Paris and St. Petersburg and to his attitude toward the Jews.¹²⁵

While critical of some aspects of Bismarck's program to counter the effects of the economic depression that set in with the crash of 1873, Aehrenthal praised the chancellor for his ability to see the necessity for reform. Bismarck at least postulated a plan that would become reality because "the kernel of most of his ideas is healthy." In any event, "success will not be denied him,

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ HHStA, NA/1, Buquoy to Aehrenthal, Schloss Hauenstein/Horní Hrad (Northwestern Bohemia), 11 September 1899 (Wank, 1: No. 106).

¹²² See chapter 5 below.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Some of what follows draws on my article "A Case of Aristocratic Antisemitism in Austria: Count Aehrenthal and the Jews, 1878-1907," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 30 (1985): 435-456.

since his strongest opponents, the extreme free traders, criticize everything, but possess no remedy for the sufferings and needs of our epoch."¹²⁶

Aehrenthal's letters to his father from his first diplomatic post in Paris belie the judgment of Carlo Sforza, the Italian statesman, which has been echoed by others, that the time Aehrenthal spent in Paris was not valuable because he was too young and too full of prejudices to appreciate the revival of French democracy.¹²⁷ As a provisional attaché with unexacting duties, Aehrenthal followed the events leading up to the crisis of 16 May 1877 with great interest. True, as an aristocrat, Aehrenthal rejected democracy as a political principle, but his views were far from those of a reactionary. He was perceptive enough to see that a significant part of the French bourgeoisie was no longer committed to full-scale democratization of society and that the restoration of the monarchy in France would lead to "the rekindling of a terrible civil war."¹²⁸ He sharply criticized the monarchist president of France, Marshall McMahon, for his so-called *coup d'état* on 16 May.¹²⁹ In Aehrenthal's view, the republic was the best form of government for France.¹³⁰ After attending a debate in the French senate, he praised the "calmness" and "objectively critical" analysis of the political situation of the Republican speakers and sharply criticized the reactionaries, "who soon will be confronted with the alternative: *coup d'état* or defeat."¹³¹ At the death of the moderate conservative former president, Adolphe Thiers, who contributed to resolving the crisis of 16 May, Aehrenthal, in a letter to his mother, condemned those upper-class members of French society who maligned him:

Even in the most educated and reliable circles people lower themselves to such infamous behavior. Particularly in my club made up almost fully of pure reactionaries, the joy over the passing of the great patriot [Thiers] is expressed in brutal ways. Thus are the principles of Christian love of one's fellow man carried out in practice. Forgive me, dearest mother, these strong words; however, I am too furious at these hypocritical conservatives to conceal my anger within myself.¹³²

Aehrenthal's criticism of the backwardness, corruption, and inefficiency of the Russian government in the early 1880s was equally acute and realistic, and

¹²⁶ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 11 May 1879 (Adlgasser, 1: 153–155).

¹²⁷ Carlo Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe: Portraits and Personal Impressions and Recollections* (London, 1930), 46.

¹²⁸ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Paris, 19 February 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 81–83).

¹²⁹ Ibid., 23 May 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 92).

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 21 June 1877.

¹³² Ibid., Aehrenthal to his mother, Paris, 7 September 1877 (Adlgasser, 1: 101–102).

stressed the need for reform to disarm revolutionary currents. In a memorandum on the agrarian question in Russia, written in 1881, he placed the blame for peasant unrest and rural poverty squarely on the "wholly incomprehensible shortsightedness" of the lawmakers who drew up the emancipation act of 1861. They failed to couple the abolition of serfdom with a land settlement that would have ensured the existence of the peasantry and prevented the rise of a rural proletariat. As it happened, the twenty years since the emancipation were rendered ineffective "as a panacea against the rise of the socialist danger."¹³³ The causes of peasant dissatisfaction were real — small land parcels, communal ownership, constant redivision of the land, increasing poverty, and oppressive passport regulations — and unless the government instituted reforms from above to relieve the oppressive conditions under which the peasants lived, the entire system would collapse. The government, Aehrenthal wrote,

which had mistakenly believed that the transition from a patriarchal system to a modern economic one would be relatively easy, will have to give the agrarian question, which has once again unrolled, its greatest attention in order to prevent the most important class in the empire, in which already critical symptoms of dissatisfaction are showing, from coming into a situation which would involve the existing order in the greatest danger.¹³⁴

One year later, in a report on the special security agency for the protection of the tsar (*Okhrana*) and a quasi-official patriotic organization for combating nihilism (*Druzhina*), Aehrenthal stressed the lack of comprehension, indecisiveness, and internal rivalries that rendered the government and its supporters unable to undertake even moderate reforms to meet the crisis of transition, although both knew that a modification of the rigid system of tsarist absolutism was inevitable.¹³⁵

The most striking evidence of Aehrenthal's flexible and moderate position is offered by his early attitudes toward the Jews. Like most aristocrats, Aehrenthal "harbored little sympathy for the Jews."¹³⁶ In part, this dislike was derived

¹³³ HHStA, PA X (Russland)/76, *Zur Agrar-Frage in Russland: Mémoire Baron Aehrenthals*. The document is enclosed in a report from the secretary of the Austro-Hungarian embassy in St. Petersburg to the foreign minister in Vienna. Ibid., Baron Konstantin von Trauttenberg to Baron Heinrich Haymerle, R. 40C, 30 July 1881.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ *Notizen über die Ochrana und die Druschina*, The document is enclosed in a report from the Austro-Hungarian ambassador at St. Petersburg to the foreign minister in Vienna. Ibid./78, Count Anton Wolkenstein to Count Gustav Kálnoky, R. 52B, secret, 5 July 1882.

¹³⁶ Werner Olscher, "Alles Recht geht vom Volk aus," in Siegert, ed., *Adel in Österreich*, 84. Writ-

from medieval religious roots and a view of the Jew as an alien and intrusive social element in Christian society.¹³⁷ In part, too, it was the result of a general aristocratic feeling that although wealth was a necessary foundation for the aristocratic way of life, there was something distasteful about a career devoted to money-making: "commerce and money-making were not for gentlemen."¹³⁸ This stigma attached especially to the Jews because of their "marked talent for money-making."¹³⁹ Aristocrats also felt that there was something "sinister" about the "acute intellectuality" of the Jews¹⁴⁰ and were ambivalent about the effects of the heavy involvement of the Jews in culture, especially in journalism.¹⁴¹ Yet, it must be stressed, Aehrenthal's early dislike of the Jews was a mild one. If, in a letter to his father, he expressed antipathy for the large number of black-caftaned Orthodox Jews whom he saw at Polish railway stations during his many trips to St. Petersburg,¹⁴² he could at the same time chat amiably on one of his trips with "a Jewish acquaintance, a Berliner from a progressive [assimilated] family who said a great many interesting things about conditions in Germany."¹⁴³ Along with other aristocrats, Aehrenthal also took part in shoots on the estate of the Jewish financier Baron Albert Rothschild.¹⁴⁴

ing to his mother, in 1906, from the Istrian resort town of Abbazia/Opatija, he waxed eloquent about the beautiful weather "and the presence of everything to gladden the human heart.... What spoils Abbazia are the people, especially these loathsome Jews." SAL, RAA/124, 17 March 1906 (Adlgasser, 2: 901). He gives no indication as to what he finds "loathsome" about them. His dislike of the Jews as an ethnic-religious group, however, did not, as we shall see, prevent amiable relations with educated, assimilated Jewish acquaintances.

137 Arkel, *Antisemitism in Austria*, 56–62, and Pulzer, *The Rise of Anti-Semitism*, 127–136. For a summary of the Christian anti-Semitic tradition see Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), 13–22.

138 See Fritz Posch, "Macht und Mächtige," in Siegert, ed., *Adel in Österreich*, and Allmayer-Beck, "Die Träger des staatlichen Macht," 260. This should not obscure the fact that the Austrian aristocracy was heavily involved in capitalist agriculture, enterprises such as breweries, sugar refining from sugar beet, forest products, and mining. Many aristocrats also were ready to obtain income from serving on boards of directors of banks and railroad companies. See Matis, *Österreichs Wirtschaft*, 72, 120, 242.

139 Olscher, "Alles Recht geht vom Volk aus," 84.

140 Ibid.

141 John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848–1897* (Chicago, 1981; new ed. 1995), 76.

142 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 21 July 1878 (Adlgasser, 1: 115–117).

143 Ibid., 123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 7 March 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 444–445).

144 Ibid., 122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 17 April 1885. The shoot took place on the Halenstein estate (near Waidhofen an der Ybbs in Lower Austria) of Baron Albert Rothschild (1844–1911), the head of the Vienna branch of the Rothschild bank. See also *ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 13 April 1885 (Adlgasser, 1: 301; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 26).

While there are occasional negative references to a "Jewish press coterie in Vienna" in his correspondence with his parents, such utterances are infrequent and muted until the end of the 1880s.¹⁴⁵ There is little evidence of the modern strain of anti-Semitism that sees the Jews, as a "race," as the cause of all the ills of the modern industrial-capitalist world and their removal as the cure for those ills.¹⁴⁶ On the whole, in the period from the late seventies until the early nineties, Aehrenthal saw anti-Semitic outbreaks as a symptom of deeper social-structural problems and official ineptness in dealing with those problems.

In his early reports from Russia, Aehrenthal condemned anti-Semitic outbursts in that country. In his view, not only were the Jews scapegoats for the failure of the government to deal with the agrarian problem, but the massive pogroms begun in 1881 were a threat to the established authority of the state that no conservative could condone. In 1882, Aehrenthal wrote to his father,

Here [in Russia] the situation is even worse than at home.... The most recent Jewish persecutions are a symptom of the weak power and authority of the government officials. These [pogroms] are without a doubt direct attempts to test the progress of the disorganization of the Russian state structure.¹⁴⁷

Earlier, in his memorandum on the agrarian question previously referred to, he wrote that the "Jewish persecutions in southern Russia" are proof of the readiness of Russian peasants "to lend an ear to destructive incitements."¹⁴⁸

A further measure of Aehrenthal's resistance to anti-Semitism at this time is his response to the first peak in the rise of the new political anti-Semitism in Austria and Hungary in 1883. Writing to his father about the "grave crisis" of the Hungarian state structure, Aehrenthal remarked that "the news from Hungary sounds somewhat better, but the anti-Semitic movement does not appear to have been checked by a long way."¹⁴⁹ The latter is a reference to the violence following the acquittal of several Jews in the Tisza-Eszlar blood-libel trial.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 7 October 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 230-232; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 9).

¹⁴⁶ See Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 246, 261-262.

¹⁴⁷ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 24 April 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 243-245; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 16).

¹⁴⁸ *Zur Agrar-Frage in Russland* (same as n. 133 above).

¹⁴⁹ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 16 September 1883 (Adlgasser, 1: 276-277; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 21).

¹⁵⁰ See Andrew Handler, *Blood Libel at Tiszaeszlár*. East European monographs, vol. 68 (Boulder, Colorado, 1980), 175-181.

Beginning around 1890, Aehrenthal's correspondence begins to reveal signs of his heightening political anxiety. The radical political parties that emerged in the late 1870s, especially the Socialists, and the radical Christian Social and German Nationalist Parties of the lower middle classes, were now more united and enjoyed mass support. They pressed their demands for social and political reform through mass demonstrations and strikes. The demonstrations that accompanied the campaign for universal male suffrage in Austria frightened the upper classes and threatened their oligarchic control.¹⁵¹ In this sociopolitical atmosphere, fear of revolutionary disruptions and a marked emphasis on maintaining order replaced Aehrenthal's earlier emphasis on reforms as a way of disarming social and political conflicts. Alluding to Emperor William II's new social legislation in 1890, designed to wean German workers away from socialism, Aehrenthal observed that

The appetite of the workers would only be enlarged thereby, and their demands would become more boundless. I fear that finally even in our time, as always when the social question becomes acute, there will be nothing left to do but send home with bloody heads those who dare to attack private property.¹⁵²

He applauded the harsh treatment of striking workers. "I read with satisfaction," he wrote to his mother in 1893, "that the excesses of the workers in the Bohemian mining districts are being energetically combated, and it appears that the Governor (*Statthalter*) of Northern Bohemia (Josef Thun) acted coolly and prudently."¹⁵³ The fears aroused by the "socialistic current of the time with its danger of mass strikes," led Aehrenthal in 1906 to regard it as imperative that the government have "sufficient and reliable troops to intervene with decisiveness in the event of internal disturbances."¹⁵⁴

151 See May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 322–324, 333–334, 337–338.

152 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 7 March 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 444–445).

153 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 6 July 1893. There was only one governor (*Statthalter*) for all of Bohemia, at the time Count Franz Thun-Hohenstein, a distant cousin of the mentioned Count Joseph and also of Aehrenthal's mother. The reference to the "Statthalter von Nordböhmen" is probably meant ironically. Count Joseph Thun-Hohenstein was *Bezirkshauptmann* (district head) in Teplitz/Teplice, the center of the mining district. The post was considered the most important administrative job in northern Bohemia and was usually held by a senior public servant. Before he was sent to Teplice, Thun-Hohenstein was a high official in the *Statthaltere* (governor's office) in Prague.

154 HHStA, PA I (Allgemeines)/475, Fascicle XXXII/1, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl. No. 1, secret, 20 July 1906. The quotation is from Solomon Wank, "Diplomacy against the Peace Movement: The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office and the Second Hague Peace Conference of 1907," in Wank, ed., *Doves and Diplomats: Foreign Offices and Peace Movements in Eu-*

A telltale sign of Aehrenthal's heightened sociopolitical anxiety in the face of challenges to monarchical society by mass political movements pressing for democratization is the change in his attitude toward the Jews. Whereas earlier he had discerned concrete social and economic forces behind social and political conflicts, his acute analytical powers now became distorted by fear of conspiracies in which Jews played a prominent role. To Aehrenthal, anti-Semitic outbursts were no longer a symptom pointing to deeper problems; rather, he now saw the Jews themselves as a significant cause of social disruption, including pogroms. In this regard, although Aehrenthal, like most Austrian aristocrats, would have nothing to do with the vulgar anti-Semitism of radical German-Austrian nationalists such as Georg von Schönerer,¹⁵⁵ his own thinking became characterized by some of the same radical anti-Semitic attitudes.

Increasingly, Aehrenthal saw the intensification of the nationality conflict as a consequence of the "Judaization" of the press and politics. Commenting on a newspaper report of secret negotiations between the two rival aristocratic political factions to reconcile their differences, Aehrenthal wrote to his father about what he saw as the indiscretion of Prague's leading German newspaper, *Bohemia*, and a workers' strike in Vienna:

This indiscretion of the *Bohemia* about the compromise is typical of our Judaization (*Verjudung*). Everywhere one can perceive the toxic virus with which this abominable race has infected our relationships. With these conditions and in our time of intense social movements, dismal excesses, like those that recently took place in Vienna, are not surprising. There, too, the government should have intervened in time, and I am convinced that pressure on these Jewish exploiters would have been successful and would have prevented the bloody scene.¹⁵⁶

The "bloody scene" refers to clashes between striking tramway workers and police and military units. By "Jewish exploitations," Aehrenthal most likely is referring to the board of directors of the privately owned tramway line, one

rope and America in the Twentieth Century (Westport, Conn., 1978), 61. The letter is printed in Wank, 1: No. 299, and Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 298–303.

155 On Schönerer's anti-Semitism see Andrew Whiteside, *The Socialism of Fools: Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Austrian Pan-Germanism* (Berkeley, California, 1975), 107–140.

156 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 29 April 1889 (Adlgasser, 1: 430–432). Aehrenthal's lament about "our Judaization" is an echo of radical anti-Semitic ideas about the "Judaization of Nations" (*Verjudung der Völker*). See Uriel Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany: Religion, Politics, and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870–1914* (Ithaca, New York, 1975), 266.

of whose largest shareholders was a Jewish banker.¹⁵⁷ Apparently, in Aehrenthal's mind, capitalism was either a Jewish phenomenon, or the exploitation of workers by Jewish capitalists was somehow different from exploitation by Gentile capitalists.¹⁵⁸ In either case it reflects an unwillingness or inability on Aehrenthal's part to perceive the objective social forces of change behind the conflict.

In the 1890s, in his letters to his father and others, there are repeated references to the "Jewish Press"¹⁵⁹ or more specifically the "Jewish *Neue Freie Presse*" when referring to that influential German-Austrian liberal Viennese newspaper that was published by Moritz Benedikt, an assimilated Jew.¹⁶⁰ Aehrenthal professed to believe that the German-Austrians, who had developed a strong nationalist movement to defend their predominant position in the Habsburg Empire against challenges to it from other nationalities, would follow a sounder policy if they "could emancipate themselves from the influence of the Jewish *Neue Freie Presse* and from the vulgar Schönerer."¹⁶¹ The linking of the Jewish-owned *Neue Freie Presse* with the rabidly anti-Semitic pan-German Georg von Schönerer is another example of the clouding of Aehrenthal's thought processes by anti-Semitic ideas. It is true that both the *Neue Freie Presse* and Schönerer opposed the Badeni language ordinances of 1897, which made Czech equal to German as the language of government and administration in Bohemia and Moravia, but that had nothing to do with the Jewish ownership of the newspaper. The *Neue Freie Presse* spoke for the German-Austrian liberal bourgeoisie, in whose interest it was to maintain Austria as a German-led centralized state in which the German language was, de facto if not de jure, the language of state. Social class and economic interests led to the tacit alliance between the German-Austrian liberal bourgeoisie and Schönerer.¹⁶²

157 See Ludwig Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 5 vols. (Vienna, 1922–1925), 4: 20–25.

158 Alternatively, "Jewish exploiters" may have been a reference to the Austrian Socialist leader Victor Adler, who came from a Jewish family. The Socialist newspaper *Gleichheit* of which Adler was the managing editor, strongly supported the striking workers. Adler was arrested and charged with abetting anarchist efforts to overthrow the existing social order. At the end of June, Adler was tried and sentenced to four months' imprisonment on the reduced charge of contributing to the disturbance of public peace and insulting the army. See *ibid.* Again, in Aehrenthal's clouded thinking, Adler the Jew could have become identical with the Socialist Party and its newspaper.

159 HHStA, NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, St. Petersburg, 22 July 1891.

160 See, for example, SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Sinaia, 12 October 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 664–665; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 305).

161 *Ibid.*

162 On the German-Austrians and the language question see Peter Burian, "The State Lan-

Aehrenthal's anti-Semitic views with regard to the press continued after he became foreign minister in 1906. When he had little success in influencing the press with regard to a certain policy, he attributed it to the fact that "Jewry is too omnipotent."¹⁶³ Aehrenthal was not alone in his belief in Jewish "omnipotence." In a letter to Count Leopold Berchtold, Aehrenthal's successor as ambassador to Russia, Prince Karl Fürstenberg, secretary of the embassy in St. Petersburg, wrote, "It appears that the Jewish clique, whose power throughout the monarchy is boundless, wants to ruin our high chief [Aehrenthal]."¹⁶⁴ Aehrenthal's condemnation of the Jewish "toxic substance" did not stop with the press. He also railed against the "*Jewish liberal left*" as a source of most of the confusion in the Vienna parliament.¹⁶⁵

The most striking example of the intrusion of anti-Semitic and conspiratorial elements into Aehrenthal's perception of social reality is contained in his reports from Russia on the revolution of 1905.¹⁶⁶ In his reports leading up to the revolution, Aehrenthal continued to emphasize the shortcomings of the prevailing political and economic order as the cause of disturbances, but as the revolutionaries took the initiative, his identification of the driving forces behind the revolution shifted.¹⁶⁷ Condemnation of anti-Semitic outrages, such as the "ghastly events [pogroms]" in Odessa, in 1905, is overshadowed by the conviction that Jews were responsible for the revolutionary disturbances.¹⁶⁸ Whereas in the 1880s, Aehrenthal saw peasant disaffection and social unrest, including pogroms, as results of the government's failure to make timely re-

guage Problem in Old Austria (1848-1918)," *Austrian History Yearbook* 6-7 (1970-1971): 81-103, esp. 96-103. Its "Jewishness" notwithstanding, under Aehrenthal as foreign minister the *Neue Freie Presse* was for a time the "semi-official newspaper" of the Ballhausplatz because in its strong support of the Germans and of the Dual and Triple Alliances it expressed the views of the foreign minister. Kurt Paupié, *Handbuch der österreichischen Pressegeschichte 1848-1959*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1960), 1: 148.

163 SAU-H, RABe, Aehrenthal to Berchtold, Vienna, 17 June 1907 (Wank, 2: No. 370). Microfilm copies of Aehrenthal's letters to Berchtold are among the private papers of the late Professor Hugo Hantsch preserved by the Department of History of the University of Vienna.

164 Ibid., Fürstenberg to Berchtold, 26 November 1907. Copies of Fürstenberg's letters to Berchtold also are in the Hantsch papers.

165 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 9 August 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 522-523; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 112). The emphasis is in the original.

166 Several of Aehrenthal's most revealing reports may be found appended to Abraham Ascher, "The Coming Storm: The Austro-Hungarian Embassy on Russia's Internal Crisis, 1902-1906," *Survey* 53 (October 1964): 148-164.

167 For examples of Aehrenthal's earlier analysis see *ibid.*, 153-161, and Hans Heilbronner, "Aehrenthal in Defense of Russian Autocracy," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 17 (1969): 383-384.

168 SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, Tsarskoe Selo, 3 July 1905 (Adlgasser, 2: 886-887).

forms, in 1905–1906, he saw pogroms as popular outbursts against those responsible for the revolutionary excesses of 1905. A commission of the *duma*, the newly created Russian parliament, attributed the bloody Białystok pogrom in June 1906 to the actions of the local police, but Aehrenthal saw its deeper cause in “the attack by revolutionaries on the Corpus Christi day parade, the throwing of bombs and the exasperation of the Christian population with the Jewish terrorists, who for almost two years have spread fear throughout the land.”¹⁶⁹

Aehrenthal regarded the Russian Revolution and the creation of a constitutional parliamentary system of government as vehicles of Jewish domination of Russia. As a reward to the Jews “for their distinguished service during the revolution,” the majority in the Russian *duma* was prepared to grant full rights of citizenship to the Jews.¹⁷⁰ Granting equality to the Jews, Aehrenthal maintained, “would be tantamount to handing the tsarist empire over to the *Alliance Israélite*,”¹⁷¹ since the majority of other citizens were on a very low cultural level. For Aehrenthal, the “Jewish question” in the Russian revolution was not one of eliminating long-standing evils, or opening up state service to “new blood,” or even establishing an effective legislative body: “It is a question of the destruction of the Russian Empire as we have known it for the sake of the Jews.”¹⁷²

In a report near the end of September 1906, Aehrenthal happily related that “Belief in the victory from *below* is beginning to disappear.”¹⁷³ Aehrenthal had no doubts about the inevitability of the Jews’ “eventual equality with other citizens,” but only if the “intransigent Jews disarm” and give the

169 HHStA, PA X (Russland)/128, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 25 June 1906. The translated report is printed in Ascher, “The Coming Storm,” 161–163. All quotations are from Ascher’s translation. On the report of the *duma* commission see Ascher, 161. Compare this with an earlier view of anti-Jewish rioting contained in a letter to his father from Bucharest: “Last Sunday we too had deplorable riots against the Jews. The police here too did not do its duty; rather, [they] allowed the riots to continue because it was intended that the movement be exploited for the benefit of the government.” SAL, RAA/125, 8 December 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 680–681). Aehrenthal responded to a letter from his father describing the Czech riots in Prague after the resignation of the Badeni government at the end of November 1897.

170 Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 25 June 1906 (same as in n. 169 above).

171 Ibid. The *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, founded in Paris in 1860, was an organization devoted to educational and philanthropic work, and to fighting for Jewish rights around the world. The existence of the organization — especially its name — was used by anti-Semites to “prove” the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy. See Louis Finkelstein, ed., *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion*, 2 vols. (New York, 1960), 1: 271, 342, 673.

172 Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 25 June 1906 (same as in n. 169 above).

173 HHStA, PA X (Russland)/129, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 22 September 1906. The translated report is printed in Ascher, “The Coming Storm,” 163–165. All quotations are from Ascher’s translation. The emphasis is in the original.

Russian state a chance to reform.¹⁷⁴ This depended to a significant degree on "International Jewry" ceasing its aid to "the terroristic movement [i.e., the revolution]," and on the Jewish-controlled press, especially in Vienna and Budapest, adopting a more "moderate" and "realistic" attitude toward the Russian imperial government.¹⁷⁵ The revolutionary movement, Aehrenthal wrote, "would quickly collapse without aid from International Jewry."¹⁷⁶ Aehrenthal closed his report with a warning to the great banking houses of Europe that the victory of the social revolution in Russia would be "synonymous with great financial loss for the capitalist world in Western Europe."¹⁷⁷

By implication, thinly veiled in Aehrenthal's report, the banking houses of Europe and capitalism in general were appendages of "International Jewry," which also included those two other expressions of overweening Jewish influence and power: the European press and the socialist movement. This intangible entity — "International Jewry" — which Aehrenthal perceived as very real, seemed to him to possess immense power to turn the revolutionary movement on or off. So much had Aehrenthal's critical judgment been altered by a distasteful reality that not only did Jews become scapegoats for revolution, but Jewry and revolution became synonymous, all threats to the established order being inspired by Jews. Aehrenthal's views reflected the uncritical acceptance of the standard arguments made by Russian authorities and anti-Semitic circles to justify the pogroms.¹⁷⁸

Aehrenthal's political anxiety, and with it his more radical anti-Semitic views, seem to have abated in 1907, after it looked as though radical forces had been checked: tsarist power in Russia appeared to him to be gaining the upper hand in its struggle with the duma; Emperor Francis Joseph had emerged victorious from the constitutional crisis with the Hungarians; and the introduction of universal male suffrage in Austria had ended mass demonstrations. There are few clearly anti-Semitic references in Aehrenthal's private or official correspondence after he became foreign minister in 1906. His allusion to the "omnipotence" of Jewry in a 1907 letter to Count Berchtold is a rare oc-

174 Ibid.

175 Ibid.

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid.

178 Aehrenthal was not alone in this regard; British diplomats in St. Petersburg and the Russian provinces passed on the same officially inspired interpretation of events to the foreign office in London. See Eliyahu Feldman, "British Diplomats and British Diplomacy and the 1905 Pogroms in Russia," *Slavonic and East European Review* 65/4 (October 1987): 579–607. See also Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *Antisemitismus und reaktionäre Utopie: Russischer Konservatismus im Kampf gegen den Wandel von Staat und Gesellschaft, 1890–1917. Historische Perspektiven*, vol. 13 (Hamburg, 1978), 36–40, 49–51, 87–103.

currence.¹⁷⁹ However, since the quantity and quality of Aehrenthal's personal correspondence declined sharply after this time, one cannot conclude simply from Aehrenthal's letters that the modes of thought underlying his radical anti-Semitic views had been expunged from his mind.¹⁸⁰ The most that can be said is that the intense expression of his anti-Semitic feelings waned.

While the significance of the infusion of virulent anti-Semitic ideas into Aehrenthal's originally mild anti-Jewish feelings should not be exaggerated, neither should it be dismissed as inconsequential. It is true that Aehrenthal, like most Austrian aristocrats — the Christian Social politician Prince Alois Liechtenstein was the exception — never publicly made anti-Semitic statements and would have nothing to do with the noisy and vulgar anti-Semitism of the German-Austrian radical nationalist or Christian Social parties.¹⁸¹ Nor is there any evidence of his support for radical anti-Semitic demands to restrict legally the number of Jews involved in certain areas of economic, political, or cultural life. At most, as can be seen from his castigation of the "Jewish liberal press" and his reports from Russia, Aehrenthal thought that the Jews should exercise self-restraint in certain economic and cultural areas in which they were disproportionately represented, such as finance and journalism.

Furthermore, Aehrenthal's anti-Semitism never contained that personal hatred of the Jews that sprang from the pathological belief held by many European petty bourgeoisie that the Jews were responsible for their personal failures and misfortunes. As an aristocrat, Aehrenthal's social position was too lofty and his sense of self-worth based on noble birth too strong for him to identify the course of events in his personal life with the real or imagined machinations of Jews or any persons situated below him on the social ladder. Even after 1900, Aehrenthal continued to have contact with prominent patriotic Austrian Jews such as, among others, Heinrich Friedjung¹⁸² and Joseph Redlich, a converted Jew and political confidant who frequently was invited

¹⁷⁹ See 115 above.

¹⁸⁰ The decline in the correspondence has several sources. Being present in Vienna allowed Aehrenthal to talk directly to many people including former correspondents. Furthermore, the burdens of his office, his responsibilities as a husband and father (he married Countess Paula Széchenyi in 1902), and the onset of leukemia at the end of 1909 left him with little time and energy for personal — as opposed to official private — letter writing. Most of the correspondence with his mother (his father died in 1898) was taken over by his wife. Aehrenthal's own letters to his mother seldom contain much beyond assurances of good health or satisfactory recovery from some ailment.

¹⁸¹ See in general Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*, 200, and Arkel, *Antisemitism in Austria*, 47, 61–62, 65, 67, 191. On Liechtenstein as an exception see Pulzer, 178, and Arkel, 65–66.

¹⁸² See the Aehrenthal–Friedjung correspondence published in Wank, parts 1 and 2, and Friedjung's numerous conversations with Aehrenthal published in Friedjung, vols. 1 and 2.

to dinner when Aehrenthal was foreign minister.¹⁸³ Aehrenthal's break with Friedjung in 1909 had political and not "racial" grounds.¹⁸⁴ But in spite of the differences noted above, the anti-Semitic ideas and attitudes that accompanied Aehrenthal's heightened political anxiety had some things in common with those of resentful petty bourgeois and radical anti-Semitic circles. Chief among these similarities was the view of the Jews as a toxic virus in the body politic, the "Jewish Question" as the explanation of all of the crises of modern society, and the conspiratorial vision of "International Jewry." From this perspective, Aehrenthal's anti-Semitism is significant in two ways. In a general sense, his departure from earlier and more "gentlemanly" anti-Jewish views attests the effect that heightened sociopolitical unrest and revolutionary disturbances exerted on the critical faculties of many cultured and well-educated European conservatives. Even if one attributes the intensity of Aehrenthal's anti-Semitism to the special situation of his having witnessed the disintegration of the Russian political system or to the influence of his anti-Semitic Russian friends, it is still striking how easy it was for him to accept the conspiracy theory.

In their memoirs, several aristocratic members of Habsburg officialdom provide examples of this weakening of critical faculties. For example, when displeased with the behavior of certain government officials who happened to have Jewish origins, Count Erich Kielmansegg, the governor of Lower Austria (1895–1911), pointedly refers to their Jewish backgrounds. Where the individuals concerned might have changed their names, Kielmansegg gives their real, i.e., Jewish, names, for example "Ritter [Heinrich] von Halban, the former Polish Jew Blumenstock," when referring to that high Austrian official.¹⁸⁵ Such references might be interpreted as betokening some displaced re-

183 Among numerous entries in Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, see 1: 3, 9 November 1908; 9, 15 March 1909; and 42, 9 January 1910. See also the editor's introduction in 1: xviii–xix. Redlich became a Protestant in 1903. Nor did Aehrenthal have a moment's hesitation in inviting the Rosé string quartet, which was led by Arnold Rosé, the Jewish concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, to perform a musical program after a formal diplomatic dinner in the ambassadorial palace. SAL, RAA/124, Paula Aehrenthal to Maria Aehrenthal, St. Petersburg, 28 March 1903 (Adlgasser, 2: 831–832).

184 On the so-called Friedjung Affair that led to the break, see chapter 11 in volume two of this biography, in preparation.

185 Erich Graf Kielmansegg, *Kaiserhaus, Staatsmänner und Politiker: Aufzeichnungen des k.k. Statthalters Erich Graf Kielmansegg*, Walter Goldinger, ed. (Vienna, 1966), 262. Another example is "Dr. Rudolf Sieghart, the baptized Jew formerly named Singer," in referring to the governor of the *Boden-Credit-Anstalt* bank (ibid., 397). See also Lützow, *Im diplomatischen Dienst*. When criticizing General Alfred Henikstein, a commanding officer on the Bohemian front in the disastrous loss to Prussia in 1866, as a "witty fellow and a buffoon without any knowledge of strategy," Lützow obviously felt constrained to add, "and of Jewish ancestry"

sentment against bourgeois society over the declining *Adelswelt* (aristocratic social order) on the part of the aristocracy, of which the presence of Jews in high places was symptomatic. The impression one receives from these memoirs is that it is the presence of Jews or individuals of Jewish background in public and cultural life that is the explanation of existing social ills. In that sense, Aehrenthal's anti-Semitic views may have been more virulent than those of other aristocrats because of the psychological link in his personality structure between political dissolution and personality dissolution, but they were not unique.¹⁸⁶ The anti-Semitic tendencies in the thought and feelings of Aehrenthal and other aristocrats probably contributed to the high level of tolerance for the expression of hostile anti-Jewish feelings in Austria before 1914. The same anti-Semitic views, quite apart from the aristocrats' distance from mass political parties and movements, may have contributed to the failure of those aristocrats who outlived Aehrenthal to stem the tide of vicious anti-Semitism associated with Fascism and right-wing political parties after the First World War.¹⁸⁷

More specifically, as a measure of his high level of political anxiety in the years after 1900, knowledge of Aehrenthal's anti-Semitic views provides a deeper insight into the marked arch-conservative and counterrevolutionary current in Aehrenthal's political thought after 1900 as reflected in his opposition to universal male suffrage in 1907.¹⁸⁸ His idea about resurrecting the Three Emperors' Alliance, reminiscent of the Holy Alliance of the Metternich era, to dam up revolutionary and socialist currents may have been unrealistic,

(*ibid.*, 7). In another place, Lützow, who as ambassador to Italy (1904–1910) clashed with Foreign Minister Aehrenthal over policy toward that country, paid Aehrenthal an unflattering compliment when he attributed to him, in an oblique reference to the minister's alleged Jewish background, "a not common degree of what is generally characterized as 'Semitic' cunning" (*ibid.*, 135).

186 In this regard, Count Aehrenthal's son commented on his father's anti-Semitic views as follows: "The views of my father's generation and class were like that. I remember myself having heard them again and again during my youth and even later on. Getting confronted with them today one is appalled by the implications and shudders at the thought of what had to happen to prove their fallacy, but it is a fact that they were widespread. I believe a great difficulty in really understanding the mental processes of past periods is our knowledge of later developments, a burden that the past generation was unaware of but of course we cannot eliminate." Letter of Count Johann Lexa von Aehrenthal to the author, 21 September 1967.

187 For some elaboration of this point see Wank, "A Case of Aristocratic Antisemitism," 454–455. In fact, some of the leaders of the Fascist *Heimwehr* came from the aristocracy. See Francis L. Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria from Schönerer to Hitler*. Sage Studies in 20th Century History, vol. 7 (London–Beverly Hills, California, 1977), 120, 134.

188 See chapter 8 of volume 2 of this biography, in preparation.

but it was meant seriously.¹⁸⁹ His anti-Semitic views highlight those qualities of his sociopolitical consciousness that prevented him from perceiving the real causes of the Habsburg Monarchy's problems and developing realistic solutions to them.

Returning to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter, it is difficult to agree with Musulin's claim that had he lived, Aehrenthal might have saved the Habsburg Monarchy from dissolution. Saving the Habsburg Monarchy in the twentieth century would have required far-reaching changes to adapt the monarchy's anachronistic dynastic-imperial structure to modern forms of political and social existence. Neither the obsolete idea of dynastic-imperial centralism, which shaped Aehrenthal's political thinking, nor the equally obsolete aristocratic federalism of Schwarzenberg, both of which were infused with an absolutist ethos, were adequate for that task; nor were Aehrenthal's imperialist ambitions in the Balkan peninsula a solution to the Habsburg Empire's problems. The monarchy's problems were internal. As pointed out earlier, the intractability of the empire's relations with Russia and the Balkan states was a consequence of its internal composition. Aehrenthal, as Joseph Redlich perceptively observed in his diary at the time of the foreign minister's death, was "not a stranger to modern times, [but] he did not inwardly belong to them."¹⁹⁰ In a similar vein, Joseph Maria Baernreither wrote, "He [Aehrenthal] was the last noted diplomat of old Austria still filled with the great traditions, which, however, have been robbed of their content in Europe by the displacements and forces of history, which [he] nevertheless courageously championed but was not able to point in new directions."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ See chapter 5 below.

¹⁹⁰ Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 125, 18 February 1912.

¹⁹¹ HHStA, NBa/42, folio pages 368–369, Zu Aehrenthal: Bilanz, undated.

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THEORY OF QUANTUM MECHANICS

LECTURE 2

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LECTURE 4

THEORY OF QUANTUM MECHANICS

FROM KÁLNOKY'S "PUPIL" TO INDEPENDENT MISSION CHIEF IN BUCHAREST, 1879–1898

Kálnoky's "Pupil"

One of the ironies of Aehrenthal's life, as we have seen, was that he became a consummate diplomat without inwardly desiring that career. Another irony is that he spent the greater part of his diplomatic career in Russia, becoming an expert on that country, which he largely found physically and spiritually oppressive. Writing to his mother in November 1882, he said, "After living five years in the north, and in a land where culturally there is almost nothing to praise, I feel the express need to refresh my mind and body by the beautiful climate and the other splendid treasures of the classical land [Italy]."¹ When, after an absence of several years, he returned to St. Petersburg as first secretary of the embassy and chargé d'affaires in 1888 and ambassador in 1899, he expressed his personal unhappiness over these appointments, not least because it took him far away from the "parental house."²

If the post in Russia was physically and spiritually oppressive, it turned out to be, as his parents had hoped, professionally advantageous for Aehrenthal. His seriousness and intelligence early earned him the praise of the ambassador, Baron Ferdinand von Langenau,³ and caused him to be noticed by Count Julius Andrassy, who singled him out as one of the most able men among the younger diplomats.⁴ However, Aehrenthal's meteoric rise in the diplomatic

1 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 2 November 1882.

2 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 14 April 1888 (Adlgasser, 1: 403–404). In another letter to his father, we can see the effects of the mental compensations that he had adopted to overcome the motional anguish of separation from family and country life (see 64–67 above). About Moscow, where he spent several days on consular matters, he wrote, "Moscow always exerts on me a great charm; it is a city with a great deal of character and an abundance of stimulating activities in many different areas." Ibid., 123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 18 November 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 530–531; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 121).

3 For his part, Aehrenthal, who liked Langenau as a person, had a low opinion of the ambassador's ability. To his mother he wrote, "Langenau is the best man in the world, but this would be the last characteristic which I would demand of an ambassador. I will spare you further jeremiads on the subject even though they unfortunately are all too justified." Ibid., 122, St. Petersburg, 25 May 1879 (Adlgasser, 1: 155–156). More-senior diplomats held the same critical view of Langenau. See Reinhard Wittram, "Die russisch-nationalen Tendenzen der achtziger Jahre im Spiegel der österreich-ungarischen diplomatischen Berichte aus St. Petersburg," in Wittram, *Das Nationale als europäisches Problem: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalitätsprinzips vornehmlich im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1954), 188.

4 HHStA, NA/2, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Madonna di Campiglio, 30 August 1907 (Wank, 2:

service was brought about by his relationship with Count Gustav Kálnoky, who replaced the ailing Baron Langenau as ambassador in July 1879. The great friendship that developed between Kálnoky and Aehrenthal was decisive for the course of Aehrenthal's life and career. Even as foreign minister, Aehrenthal called himself Kálnoky's "pupil."⁵

Aehrenthal immediately established a close rapport with Kálnoky. Eight days after the ambassador arrived, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother,

I have had the good fortune continually to serve under pleasant superiors, but today, I must declare, that my present chief excels by far all the others in every respect. He is very friendly toward me and, on my part, I certainly will do everything to ensure that this pleasant relationship continues for the entire period of his stay here.⁶

Kálnoky soon entrusted the young and clever attaché with responsible and interesting tasks such as putting together reports on the Russian press and writing studies on internal conditions in Russia.⁷

A letter from Kálnoky to Benjamin von Kállay, the temporary head of the foreign ministry, reveals the ambassador's high opinion of his young aide. On hearing that an older legation secretary was going to be assigned to the St. Petersburg embassy, Kálnoky wrote to Kállay recommending against it because Aehrenthal, who in May 1881 had become a paid *Honorarlegationssekretär*,⁸ would be reduced to a subordinate position:

I fear that if such should be the case, he would apply to leave here, which would be a great loss for His Majesty's service and for me; for with his linguistic knowledge and the tireless and judicious diligence with which he supports me here, he performs quite exceptional service at this post. Since I have not yet succeeded in securing a decoration for this excellent young official, I would at least like to prevent that here,

No. 391). Countess Marie Festetics related to Friedjung a conversation she had with Andrassy approximately 1881. Although Aehrenthal accused Friedjung of saying things to flatter him, the story certainly is in keeping with the high estimation of Aehrenthal held by all of the ambassadors under whom he served.

5 Franckenstein, *Diplomat of Destiny*, 7. Aehrenthal used to say that Kálnoky was the one Austro-Hungarian diplomat whom he looked up to (ibid.).

6 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 24 July 1879 (Adlgasser, 1: 163, n. 262).

7 See 108-109 above.

8 The pay was in the form of an annual allowance for official expenses, called an *Adjutum*. See Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen." An outline of Aehrenthal's career — positions, promotions, dates, salary increases, and decorations — is in ibid., 102-103. See as well the description of Aehrenthal's career (*Dienstbeschreibung*) in *Jahrbuch des k. u. k. Auswärtigen Dienstes* (Vienna, 1912).

where he is the principal worker, he is pushed back by a newcomer and, perhaps, would become lost to the embassy.⁹

Kálnoky was so desirous of keeping Aehrenthal in St. Petersburg that he offered him a rent-free apartment in the ambassadorial palace to ease the young attaché's financial worries and dissuade him from requesting a transfer to a less-expensive post.¹⁰ After moving into the embassy, Aehrenthal often dined with his chief, and his relationship with Kálnoky became much closer.¹¹

The intimate relationship between Aehrenthal and Kálnoky probably was helped along by their holding similar political views and by some shared personality traits, which manifested themselves as a compulsive and satisfying involvement in work.¹² Helmut Rumpler describes Kálnoky as typically aristocratic in his career but extremely "bourgeois" (*bürgerlich*) in his comprehension of work; that description also fits Aehrenthal,¹³ although not to the same degree as Kálnoky's "mania to do everything [which] grows from year to year."¹⁴ The similarities between the two men offset the differences between Kálnoky's prudent and cautious temperament and his protégé's more fervent and bolder nature.¹⁵

In part, the relationship was encouraged by a shared dislike of official social obligations and by the young attaché's genuine filial attitude, which the dour bachelor ambassador probably found emotionally gratifying.¹⁶ In Aehrenthal's

9 HHStA, PA XL (Interna)/334, Nachlass Kállay, Kálnoky to Kállay, St. Petersburg, 3 November 1881.

10 See 59 above.

11 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 12 June 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 183–185); *ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 12 August (Adlgasser, 1: 224–225; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 7) and 23 September 1881.

12 HHStA, Botschaftsarchiv Paris, Fascicle 615A, Aehrenthal to Count Anton Wolkenstein, Vienna, 6 June 1895. Wolkenstein was Austro-Hungarian ambassador to France at the time.

13 Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen," 108 for both Kálnoky and Aehrenthal.

14 HHStA, Botschaftsarchiv Paris, Fascicle 615A, Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, Vienna, 19 April 1895. Baron Klemens Erb von Rudtorffer, a Ballhausplatz official who served under Kálnoky, describes the foreign minister as "his own ministerial clerk, division and department head, section chief and foreign minister." The quotation from Erb's unpublished manuscript, *Aussenministerium 1848–1918*, is found in Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen," 79.

15 The most recent work on Kálnoky is Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*. Rauscher's monograph is primarily a diplomatic study of Kálnoky's years as foreign minister. See also the brief characterization of Kálnoky by Rutkowski, "Gustav Graf Kálnoky (1832–1898)."

16 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, 15 April 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 177–179). As ambassador he wrote to his mother after an embassy dinner, "Happily, next Monday is the last feeding by me. It is about time, since this obligation is beginning to bore me." *Ibid.*, 123, St.

letters to his parents there is no mention of the rudeness, irritability, and coldness that others attributed to Kálnoky.¹⁷ At least for Aehrenthal, Kálnoky possessed personal charm, conviviality, and consideration for others. He was the "kindest and most benevolent chief."¹⁸ The departure of his "revered chief" to become foreign minister in November 1881, was a great loss for Aehrenthal.¹⁹ The separation was to be only temporary. Shortly after Kálnoky left St. Petersburg, he informed Aehrenthal that he, Aehrenthal, would be transferred to the foreign ministry in Vienna in the near future.²⁰ That took place in November 1883. In the meantime, Kálnoky's replacement, the Tyrolean aristocrat Count Anton Wolkenstein, provided a considerable measure of consolation.

Aehrenthal immediately established a good relationship with his new chief. In August 1883, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother, "I feel very attached to him [Wolkenstein], and I am filled with veneration for this, in every respect, prom-

Petersburg, 11 March 1901.

17 According to the long-time Austro-Hungarian diplomat Count Heinrich Lützow, "few people found him [Kálnoky] likeable; most diplomats' wives — especially the younger ones — trembled at the thought of sitting next to him at dinner." Lützow, *Im diplomatischen Dienst*, 75. See also Franckenstein, *Diplomat of Destiny*, 7. Walter Rauscher describes him as an irksome person — "vain," "arrogant," "taciturn," "circumspect," and "painfully exact." Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 26, 28, 216.

18 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 24 November 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 235-237; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 12). Earlier, Aehrenthal wrote to his father that Kálnoky, "is the most wonderful chief in the world...friendly, indeed one can almost say collegial." Ibid., 20 February 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 171-173; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 1). I have found no evidence in Aehrenthal's correspondence with his parents or with Kálnoky to support Helmut Rumpler's assertion that the latter treated Aehrenthal "downright disparagingly." Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen Rahmenbedingungen," 79. The quoted words, which Rumpler appears to lend credence to, are those of Heinrich Kanner, journalist and influential editor (1894-1918) of the liberal Viennese newspaper *Die Zeit*. See Kanner, *Kaiserliche Katastrophenpolitik: Ein Stück zeitgenössischer Geschichte* (Vienna, 1922), 5.

19 The quoted words are in Aehrenthal to his father, 24 November 1881 (same as in n. 18). Aehrenthal's opinion of Kálnoky's predecessor, Baron Heinrich von Haymerle, was more flattering than most contemporary and later evaluations: "Our diplomacy has suffered a great loss; the stupid newspapers might maintain that the deceased was not equal to his position, but the external position of the monarchy — especially the calm, purposeful, and in general successful action in the Balkan peninsula — proves that Haymerle, without being a Bismarck, was a good minister of foreign affairs. As a great expert on the Near East [and] possessed of stupendous general knowledge, he was exceptionally well qualified to conduct the policy of peaceful conquest. Unfortunately, he has been prematurely snatched away from his fatherland and he has left his successor a well-begun but still protracted and difficult task." SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 17 October 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 232-233; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 10). On Haymerle, see Marvin L. Brown, Jr., *Heinrich von Haymerle: Austro-Hungarian Career Diplomat 1828-1881* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1973).

20 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 1 February 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 238).

inent man."²¹ Wolkenstein and Kálnoky were the same age and good friends.²² Hence the new ambassador was well disposed toward Aehrenthal from the start, and Aehrenthal could continue the filial relationship he had had with Kálnoky. Wolkenstein was no less impressed by Aehrenthal's ability than Kálnoky. In a letter to Kálnoky, Wolkenstein informed the foreign minister that he had granted Aehrenthal permission to take a trip to southern Russia even though "the loss of such a valuable worker...will create a noticeable gap." Wolkenstein granted the leave to Aehrenthal because

thereby this industrious official, supported by his knowledge of the language [and] devoting himself with zeal and success to the study of Russian conditions is offered the opportunity to enrich his knowledge of the subject.²³

Over the years, the relationship between Aehrenthal and Wolkenstein ripened into a close friendship.²⁴

Aehrenthal also found consolation in the continuing evidence of Kálnoky's favor and in the pleasure his parents derived from that approval. Early in 1882, Kálnoky succeeded in acquiring a decoration for his protégé — the Iron Cross III class — in recognition of his "outstanding performance of duty." In a letter to Aehrenthal's mother, Kálnoky wrote,

Since I had abundant opportunities to come to know and value highly his talents and his admirable attributes during the year that I spent with him in Petersburg, I can with good conscience say that this decoration is fully deserved. During his short period of service he has worked himself into such an outstanding position that he is entirely assured of a rapid and honorable career. I am happy to give you and the baron such good news about your son and to be able to express my conviction that you will get a great deal more happiness and honor from him.²⁵

Kálnoky probably was unaware of the profound psychological import for Aehrenthal of fulfilling his promise to make his parents happy. One year before his transfer to Vienna, Aehrenthal became a salaried attaché, a promotion that,

²¹ Ibid., 12 August 1883.

²² On Wolkenstein see Ernst R. Rutkowski, "Anton Graf von Wolkenstein-Trostburg (1832–1913)," *Neue Österreichische Biographie ab 1815*, vol. 17 (Vienna, 1967), 139–152, and Lützow, *Im diplomatischen Dienst*, 74–76.

²³ HHStA, AR, Fach 4/Personalien, Carton 4, Wolkenstein to Kálnoky, No. XLIII/7, 20 June 1883 (Adlgasser, 1: 269, n. 484).

²⁴ The friendship was capped by the use of the familiar "Du" with each other. SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 31 October 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 497–499).

²⁵ HHStA, NA/2, Kálnoky to Baroness Marie Aehrenthal, 3 March 1882.

as we have seen earlier with the receipt of an annual allowance, pleased him very much because it eased his financial dependence on his parents and gained him their approval.²⁶

In May 1884, six months after he arrived in Vienna, Aehrenthal was appointed court and ministerial secretary (*Hof- und Ministerialsekretär*) which, he wrote to his mother, "is for me a very significant advancement."²⁷ To his father he wrote that he was happy about his appointment "chiefly because thereby Count Kálnoky again demonstrated his benevolence toward me and his intention to advance me more rapidly."²⁸ That indeed seems to have been Kálnoky's intention. In March 1886, the thirty-two-year-old Aehrenthal was promoted, over the heads of colleagues senior to him, to legation counselor second class (*Legationsrat II. Klasse*) which caused him "to meet a few long faces" in the Ballhausplatz.²⁹

At the Ballhausplatz, Aehrenthal was assigned to the Russian and Near Eastern department, which included matters related to Turkey and the Balkan states as well as Russia. There he worked alongside the head of the department, Baron Julius Zwiédinek-Südenhorst, a close colleague and confidant of Kálnoky³⁰ and "one of the most influential functionaries at the Ballhausplatz in the late nineteenth century."³¹ The assignment reflected not only Aehrenthal's previous experience, but the overriding importance that Kálnoky attached to relations with Russia and the Balkan states, above all Serbia. In this regard, Kálnoky was more conservative and "eastern" oriented than Baron Heinrich von Haymerle and Count Julius Andrassy, his two most immediate predecessors as foreign minister. Despite their anti-Russian proclivities, Andrassy and Haymerle found that the political and diplomatic facts of Austria-Hungary's existence worked against their "western" orientation.³²

From Kálnoky, Aehrenthal learned what became for him the two basic facts of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy. The first was the inescapable necessity of establishing a basis for coexistence with Russia. In a letter from St. Petersburg in 1881, Kálnoky told Haymerle,

26 See 58-60 above.

27 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 3 May 1884. He received an annual salary of 2,000 florins plus 700 florins for official expenses. Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen," 102.

28 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 11 May 1884 (Adlgasser, 1: 286-287).

29 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 16 March 1883 (Adlgasser, 1: 333-334, n. 633).

30 Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 27.

31 Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt*, 66.

32 Andrassy entered the Three Emperors' League in 1873; and Haymerle, the Three Emperors' Alliance in 1881. See Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, chapter 3 and 109-126.

We cannot change the fact that we have this colossal empire on our frontiers, and we are faced with the alternative either of coexisting with Russia, or of hurling her back into Asia. The latter, every conscientious statesman must admit, is an impossibility for Austria-Hungary, either now or in the distant future. We *must*, therefore, coexist. And once that is admitted, then there can be no doubt that the most vital interests of the monarchy demand a measure of stability in our relations with the great Slav empire, just *because* our interests clash in the Near East, precisely *because* Russia's political, national, and religious tentacles reach across our frontiers.³³

Whatever careerist considerations might have motivated Aehrenthal, the primacy that he later attached to relations with Russia stemmed chiefly from his perception of the acute character of those relations. The deeper roots of the Austro-Russian conflict lay not in Russia's desire for territorial acquisition in the Balkans but, as Kálnoky indicates, in the monarchy's national and religious composition.

The second fact of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy was the necessity of carving out a clear-cut Austro-Hungarian sphere of influence in the Balkan peninsula, with Serbia becoming an Austro-Hungarian protectorate. Kálnoky recommended such a policy to Haymerle in 1880:

I cannot avoid expressing my well-considered conviction that the pivot of our power position in the southeast lies in *Belgrade*. As long as we are not firmly established there, whether directly or indirectly, we remain constantly on the defensive on the Danube, the Lim, and even on the Sava. If Serbia, by whatever means, is subordinate to our influence, or better still, if we are the masters in Serbia, then we can be at ease concerning our possession of Bosnia and its appendages and our position on the Lower Danube and in Romania. Only then will our power in the Balkans rest on a firm basis that accords with the important interests of the monarchy.³⁴

33 Quoted in *Mémoire des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal über die Beziehungen zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Russland 1872-1894*, June 1895. HHStA, PA I/469, Fascicle XXIII/a. This passage is printed in Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 398. Count Julius Andrassy's prognosis of the course of Austro-Russian relations was even more fatalistic than Kálnoky's. In 1876, when he was foreign minister, Andrassy observed that Austria and Russia "are immediate neighbors and must live with one another, either on terms of peace or of war. A war between the two empires would end...with the destruction or collapse of one of the two states. Before embarking on such a struggle there must be reasons of an absolutely binding character, reasons which make the conflict appear really inevitable." The passage is also quoted in Aehrenthal's *Mémoire* cited here and is printed in a slightly different translation in May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 91.

34 Quoted in *Denkschrift des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, September 1895. HHStA, PA I/469, Fascicle XXV. The passage is printed in Wank, "Foreign Policy and the Nationality Problem," 44.

Aehrenthal spent most of his diplomatic career trying to square the conciliatory and defensive note struck by Kálnoky in his view of relations with Russia with the aggressive tone of his policy recommendations regarding the Balkan peninsula.

Rarely did a young official have the opportunity to acquire insight into the workings of the foreign ministry and to participate in policy decisions to the extent that Aehrenthal did. He served as Kálnoky's personal secretary and "right-hand man"; the foreign minister spoke to the young official openly and often about his policies and plans.³⁵ Aehrenthal accompanied Kálnoky to a meeting of the German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian emperors at Skierniewice (near Warsaw) in September 1884³⁶ and to a number of meetings with Bismarck. The Iron Chancellor was impressed by Aehrenthal's political intelligence and praised him to Kálnoky.³⁷ Aehrenthal, for his part, wrote to his parents about Bismarck's great "amiability" and "benevolence."³⁸ However, by the time of Bismarck's fall from power in 1890, Aehrenthal had become more critical of the political "ruthlessness"³⁹ of the "*Wotan von Varzin*."⁴⁰

The significance that Aehrenthal later attached to the Three Emperors' Alliance probably owes something to the meetings with Bismarck. Initially, Kálnoky attached little worth to Bismarck's idea of an alliance between the

35 Plener, *Erinnerungen*, 3: 248. Ernst (1907 Baron) von Plener, the long-time parliamentary leader of the German-Austrian liberals and minister of finance (1893–1895) goes on to state that Aehrenthal was "perhaps the only official in the whole ministry with whom Kálnoky dealt on confidential terms and in whom he placed his trust and confidence" (*ibid.*). After Kálnoky's death, in 1898, Countess Christiane Thun-Salm, the wife of the Constitutionally Loyal leader Count Oswald Thun-Salm, wrote to Aehrenthal, "I know how much confidence he [Kálnoky] had in you in every respect and how much he valued your judgment. He spoke to you so openly and often concerning his policy. You have observed him for many years and were initiated into all of his plans." HHStA, NA/2, 26 December 1898. Walter Rauscher describes Aehrenthal as head of the minister's cabinet (*Vorstand des Ministerkabinetts*). Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 210. The *Cabinet des Ministres* (CdM) was created in 1895, after Kálnoky's resignation. Kálnoky, in fact, failed to resurrect an earlier version of the CdM, called the *Präsidialsektion*, which served as the foreign minister's personal secretariat. In Kálnoky's time, the *Präsidialsektion* was reduced to one of the foreign ministry's ten departments. See Somogyi, *Der gemeinsame Ministerrat*, 105–106.

36 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 18 September 1884 (Adlgasser, 1: 292).

37 Cormons, *Schicksale und Schatten*, 86. See also Egon Caesar Conte Corti, *Der Alte Kaiser: Franz Joseph I. vom Berliner Kongress bis zu seinem Tode* (Graz–Vienna–Cologne, 1955), 50; Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 33; Emil Jettel-Ettenach, "Die Politik des Grafen Aehrenthal," *Deutsche Revue* 37/1 (January–March 1912): 284.

38 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Varzin [Bismarck's estate in Prussia], 17 August 1884 (Adlgasser, 1: 289–290).

39 *Ibid.*, 123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 27 March 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 446–447).

40 *Ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 10 March 1885.

emperors of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia, but later came to value it as a weapon in the battle against antimonarchist and revolutionary currents — the same reason Bismarck did — and as a basis for peaceful coexistence between Austria-Hungary and Russia.⁴¹ Similarly, Aehrenthal's view, propounded in the 1890s, that the way to avoid war between Austria-Hungary and Russia was an agreement partitioning the Balkans into respective western and eastern spheres of influence also is traceable to the meetings with Bismarck, who pressed Kálnoky to adopt that policy.⁴²

Kálnoky, who, as we have seen, believed in the necessity of Austria-Hungary's carving out a sphere of influence in the western Balkans, nevertheless rejected the partition idea at that time. He did so for a number of reasons. The plan would have put Austria-Hungary's ally, Romania, in the Russian sphere, and he doubted that Russia would have observed the principle in Serbia and Montenegro. In the end, however, his rejection stemmed chiefly from anticipated Hungarian opposition to legitimating Russian influence anywhere in the Balkan peninsula.⁴³ Hungarian opposition in that regard led to severe Austro-Russian tension after Bulgarian Prince Alexander of Battenberg proclaimed, contrary to the 1878 Treaty of Berlin and against Russian wishes, the union of Bulgaria and the Turkish province of East Rumelia in September 1885. Under Hungarian pressure, Kálnoky, who was disposed to regard Bulgaria as a Russian sphere of influence and to refrain from intervening in the matter, publicly opposed Russian efforts to undo the union. Indeed, relations between Vienna and St. Petersburg became so bad that several times in 1886 and 1887 war appeared likely.⁴⁴ On the eve of his departure for Budapest with Kálnoky to attend the annual meeting of the Austrian and Hungarian delegations in 1886, where the foreign minister delivered his survey of the monarchy's foreign policy, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother "that the Hungarian delegates and newspaper reporters will have to pour a good portion of water into their wine if the monarchy is to be protected from light-hearted adventure."⁴⁵ Several months later, he wrote to his father,

⁴¹ See Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 117–119, 126.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 144, and István Diószegi, *Hungarians in the Ballhausplatz: Studies in the Austro-Hungarian Common Foreign Policy* (Budapest, 1983), 78–79.

⁴³ Diószegi, *Hungarians in the Ballhausplatz*, 78–88, and Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 144–146. Diószegi places greater emphasis on the opposition of the Hungarians than does Bridge.

⁴⁴ Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 155–156, 160–170, and Diószegi, *Hungarians in the Ballhausplatz*, 81–88. On the Bulgarian crisis in general see William L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871–1890*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1950), 323–361, 365–370, 390–407.

⁴⁵ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 2 November 1886 (Adlgasser, 1: 362).

We are preparing for the most serious eventualities, which does not mean that people in Vienna are eager for war, on the contrary, and rightly so, for our internal conditions are truly not the kind to permit any talk of an aggressive policy.⁴⁶

Although dead for the time being, an Austro-Russian agreement partitioning the Balkans into respective spheres of influence remained alive in Aehrenthal's diplomatic vision of the future. In the 1890s, however, his idea of an agreement had shifted from a partition of the Balkans to one based on Russian acquiescence to an Austro-Hungarian sphere of influence in the western Balkans in exchange for Vienna's consent to Russia's acquisition of Constantinople.

Involvement In Domestic Politics

Aehrenthal's participation in politics during his years in Vienna as Kálnoky's aide (1883–1888) was not limited to foreign affairs.⁴⁷ He also became involved in internal matters. The foreign minister was drawn into internal affairs by virtue of being minister of the imperial and royal house as well as minister of foreign affairs.⁴⁸ In other European monarchies, a minister of the royal house was concerned almost solely with court affairs and the private interests of the dynasty. In the Habsburg Monarchy, however, because of the peculiarities of the dualistic political structure superimposed on its traditional dynastic imperial structure, this position still retained some of its former political functions.

After 1867, despite the introduction of constitutional government in both Austria and Hungary, the foreign minister as *Hausminister* was chairman at meetings of the common ministers' council — the body that dealt with matters common to both Austria and Hungary — whenever the emperor himself was not present.⁴⁹ The foreign minister also acted as the emperor's principal liaison with the Austrian and Hungarian governments, as well as an interme-

46 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 8 February 1887 (Adlgasser, 1: 376–377; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 48).

47 On Aehrenthal's official position see n. 35 above.

48 Until 1895, the title was "minister of the imperial house and of foreign affairs." At the insistence of the Hungarians, the title was changed to "minister of the imperial and royal house and of foreign affairs." Walter Goldinger, "Die Zentralverwaltung in Cisleithanien – Die zivile gemeinsame Zentralverwaltung," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 2: *Verwaltung und Rechtswesen*, Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, eds. (Vienna, 1975), 173.

49 On the common ministers' council see Somogyi, *Der gemeinsame Ministerrat*.

diary between the two governments themselves.⁵⁰ The foreign minister had the authority to deal with all questions touching on the delegations and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and his office was responsible for keeping the minutes (*Protokoll*) of the common ministers' council. As a consequence, Aehrenthal was close to the protracted negotiations between Vienna and Budapest for the decennial renewal of the compromise that were successfully concluded in 1887.

Not all of Aehrenthal's involvement in internal politics was on the level of dualistic affairs. Aehrenthal also was engaged in Austrian politics. His correspondence and domestic political activity during the 1880s and early 1890s revolved around two interrelated problems: (1) the Czech-German national conflict in Bohemia; and (2) the split in the Large Landowners Party in Bohemia. Finding solutions to both problems became more urgent as Aehrenthal saw the resolution of both as necessary for a stronger and more unified Austrian state that could act as a brake on Magyar nationalism and separatist strivings.⁵¹ As indicated earlier, his doubts about resolving either of the problems were accompanied by increasing hostility toward the government of Count Eduard Taaffe in Austria (1879-1893). Aehrenthal viewed Taaffe's nationality and social policies as causes of disruption.⁵²

Aehrenthal's attitude toward Taaffe was negative from the beginning, but initially he adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Taaffe's first cabinet contained several moderate German-Austrian liberals as well as Feudal Conservatives, German clericals, Czechs, and Poles.⁵³ Aehrenthal saw it as a ministry above parties that might open the way to a Czech-German compromise. "It should not be forgotten," he wrote to his father in 1880, "that we are living in a transitional period in which healthier conditions shall and can develop."⁵⁴ In principle, Aehrenthal was not opposed to Taaffe's policy of nationality concessions to the Czechs. As we have seen, he counseled his father against opposing the law of 1880 that made Czech and German equal as languages of the outer administrative service in Bohemia.⁵⁵ In the same spirit of compromise and reconciliation he welcomed the agreement reached in 1881 to transform the

⁵⁰ On the various duties of the foreign minister see *ibid.*, 69, 168-175, and Erwin Matsch, *Geschichte des Auswärtigen Dienstes von Österreich (-Ungarn) 1720-1920* (Vienna-Cologne-Graz, 1980), 17-23, 84-85.

⁵¹ See 98 above.

⁵² See 85, 93-94, 96 above.

⁵³ Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 34-36. See also Paul Molisch, *Geschichte der deutschnationalen Bewegung in Oesterreich von ihren Anfängen bis zum Zerfall der Monarchie* (Jena, 1926), 112.

⁵⁴ SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 15 April 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 177-179; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 2).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, and 88-89 above.

Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague into separate Czech and German universities as confirmation of his belief "that an understanding on specific questions is still possible and that one should continue to try ...to achieve a *modus vivendi*."⁵⁶ He expressed the hope that "out of the present conflict between the parties, more reasonable and lasting conditions will develop."⁵⁷ In this regard, he was to be disappointed.

From 1882 onward, as his letters to his parents show, Aehrenthal grew increasingly more alarmed as the German–Austrian liberals left Taaffe's cabinet, the Young Czechs began to grow stronger at the expense of the more conservative Old Czechs, and radical German nationalist forces became increasingly stronger within the Liberal Party.⁵⁸ At the end of 1882, Aehrenthal wrote to his father,

Your picture of internal conditions in our narrower fatherland is very despairing ... While Slavs and Germans have taken up weapons against each other, the real enemy of every social order — anarchism — is rising.⁵⁹

Earlier, he had warned his father against supporting or cooperating with the German national party founded in 1881. "The Large Landowners (*Großgrundbesitz*)," Aehrenthal wrote, "have other than exclusively national interests to represent."⁶⁰ Viewing the nationality question from the standpoint of preserving the monarchical principle and the Habsburg Empire's Great Power position, Aehrenthal came to see Taaffe's concessions as merely whetting the appetite of the Czechs while weakening the *Staatspatriotismus* of the Germans precisely when Magyar chauvinism was growing. In the mid 1880s, while the Hungarians were creating all kinds of difficulties for Kálnoky in foreign affairs, the German–Austrian-dominated Austrian delegation loyally supported Kálnoky in opposition to "light-hearted adventures," thus strengthening Aehrenthal's view of them as supporters of the unified monarchy.⁶¹

As a bulwark against the irrational "excesses" of the nationality idea "and the growth of socialist and terroristic elements," Aehrenthal strove to bring about a regrouping of all conservative and "state-preserving" elements as a

56 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 7 October 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 256–257).

57 Ibid., 19 June 1880 (Adlgasser, 1: 186–187; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 4).

58 Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, chapters 3, 5, 6. See also Berthold Sutter, "Die politische und rechtliche Stellung der Deutschen in Österreich 1848 bis 1918," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 3/1: 209–221.

59 SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 17 November 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 259–260; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 18).

60 Ibid., 7 October 1881 (Adlgasser, 1: 230–232; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 9).

61 See 131 above.

preliminary to a Czech-German compromise to be attained through negotiations with moderate nationalist leaders of both camps. In the first instance, this meant healing the split in the ranks of the Large Landowners between the smaller Constitutionally Loyal faction and the larger Feudal Conservative faction, which had triumphed in Bohemia in the Austrian elections of August 1879 that brought Taaffe to power.⁶²

The ostensible cause of the split in the ranks of the nobility was the failure of the two aristocratic factions to reach a compromise on the number of mandates to be allotted each faction in the Large Landowners' curia in the Bohemian diet. The Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners demanded a larger number of mandates than the Feudal Conservatives felt they were warranted after an electoral defeat. The political position of the Constitutionally Loyal nobility and their bourgeois capitalist allies in the Liberal Party became even worse after the parliamentary election of 1885. That was the first election based on the new franchise law of 1882, which extended the vote to lower-middle-class artisans, small businessmen, and small farmers, most of whom were antiliberal and anticapitalist to the extent that they were opposed to big business and unrestrained *laissez-faire* policies.⁶³ In December 1886, practically all of the German members of the Bohemian diet walked out of the session in protest against some court rulings on language matters that they believed diminished the status of the German language. The German political parties now demanded the partition of the crown land into nationally defined areas, a move that they had opposed as long as the Czechs did not possess sufficient power to challenge the predominant position of the Germans.⁶⁴

Aehrenthal saw the election of 1885 as creating the grounds for a new attempt at reconciling the differences between the two aristocratic factions. The election had resulted in the growth of radical forces in both the Czech and German camps, and Aehrenthal believed that all large landowners had an interest in checking that growth. In 1889, he agreed to act as an intermediary

62 Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 34-36. In other parts of Austria the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners were stronger than the Feudal Conservatives, e.g., Lower Austria, Styria, Carinthia, and Austrian Silesia. See Höbelt, "'Verfassungstreue' und 'Feudale'," 108.

63 Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 77, 223, 237, and Molisch, *Geschichte der deutschnationalen Bewegung*, 130.

64 Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 242. The Germans' boycott of the Bohemian diet duplicated the Czech boycott of the lower house of the Austrian parliament (*Reichsrat*) from 1863 to 1879 to protest the centralist constitution of 1861 (February Patent), the Austrian constitution of December 1867, and autonomy not having been granted to the kingdom of Bohemia similar to that granted to the kingdom of Hungary by the Compromise of 1867. The boycott was extended to the Bohemian diet in 1872 and lasted there until 1878. See Garver, *The Young Czech Party*, 61-68.

between his father and the Feudal Conservative Count Karl Buquoy.⁶⁵ In the beginning, there seemed to be some hope, since the Feudal Conservatives were apprehensive about the increasing strength of the Young Czechs. To his father, Aehrenthal wrote that he hoped that the Large Landowners would "stop traveling down the road of nationality politics" and realize that it "above all should be concerned with its own interests and, for the immediate future, should have only one goal — the preservation of that which exists."⁶⁶ Again his hopes were disappointed. The negotiations foundered; the Constitutionally Loyal landowners demanded more mandates than the Feudal Conservatives were willing to give.⁶⁷ As Aehrenthal correctly saw, however, the deeper reason for the failure was the inability of both factions of the Large Landowners to separate themselves from the respective national parties with which they "have become engaged too much." Without the support of the national parties, both noble factions feared that they would become "politically dead."⁶⁸

Despite the failure of the negotiations between the two wings of the Large Landowners, an agreement between the Czechs and Germans was reached in 1890. Prompted by the strong showing of the Young Czechs in the Bohemian diet elections of July 1889, the Feudal Conservatives, who rejected any idea of an alliance with the Young Czechs, sounded out the Old Czechs and moderate Germans on the idea of a conference to resolve their differences on nationality issues.⁶⁹ Faced with the weakening of the Old Czechs as an important factor in his governing coalition, Taaffe found it necessary to compromise with the German liberals. Therefore, in the last days of 1889, representatives of moderate German and Czech parties met in Vienna and hammered out an understanding. Aehrenthal wrote to his father that "not for a long time has there been for us Austrians a time when we could face the future with so much hope."⁷⁰ He heralded the agreement, behind which he saw the intervention of the emperor, "as creating a *modus vivendi*."⁷¹ He hoped that the compromise would

65 HHStA, NA/1, Buquoy to Aehrenthal, Prague, 5 February 1889.

66 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 17 March 1889 (Adlgasser, 1: 426-427; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 55).

67 SAT, RABu, Aehrenthal to Buquoy, St. Petersburg, 10 April 1889 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 56).

68 Ibid., Prague, 13 December 1889 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 65).

69 On the 1890 compromise see in general Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 239-274. The Young Czechs carried 39 of the 97 Czech districts. Even though the Old Czechs won in 58 districts, the election marked the beginning of the end of Old Czech predominance. In the diet elections of 1891, the Young Czechs won in 59 districts and the Old Czechs in 31. The Young Czechs won a decisive victory in the 1895 elections; they won 90 seats while the Old Czechs won only 3. For the election results see Garver, *The Young Czech Party*, 347, Table 17.

70 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 24 January 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 439-440; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 66).

71 Ibid., 3 February 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 441-442; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 67).

be "carried out diligently and honestly...so that the monarchy through internal consolidation acquired the necessary strength for later events."⁷²

The agreement that Aehrenthal saw as the beginning of a new era really signaled the end of an old one. The 1890 compromise was made between political parties representing social classes whose power was waning. To the great satisfaction of the Bohemian-Germans, it partitioned the crown land along national lines, left German as the language of internal administration, created separate electoral curiae for Czechs and Germans while retaining a common curia for the large landowners, and gave the numerically inferior Germans a veto in all constitutional amendments. The compromise failed because the Young Czechs, who had not been invited to the conference, refused to accept it. Not only did the 1890 Vienna agreement reject the idea of a unified and autonomous Bohemia based on the historical Bohemian state rights (*Staatsrecht*), but it also failed to achieve equality in language matters. German alone remained the language used within the organs of government in Bohemia. The agreement of 1890 therefore remained a dead letter, even though some minor points, such as the separation of agricultural and school bodies along national lines, were realized.⁷³ The rejection of the compromise's major stipulations, however, greatly disappointed Aehrenthal.

For a while, Aehrenthal held on to his hopes that a Czech-German settlement would be reached because "the emperor is so convinced of the necessity of a *modus vivendi* and is pursuing it energetically and then because the conservative nobility as well as the Germans have a capital interest in the realization of the compromise."⁷⁴ But as we have already seen, by 1892 Aehrenthal's tone changed in the face of what he regarded as "the pathological development" of the national movements in Austria and Hungary. "Muddling through and pasting together," were no longer desirable or possible. The only hope was for the crown to "energetically put a halt to bold, separatist tendencies in Hungary and to emphasize its authority not only over there, but also in Austria."⁷⁵ Aehrenthal agreed with the Feudal Conservative Prince Karl Schwarzenberg that the only solution to the situation in Bohemia was "the speedy [and] energetic suppression of the democratic rabble of the *Národní Listy* [the Young Czech newspaper]."⁷⁶ Aehrenthal also thought that Schwarzenberg was

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 252-159, and Karl Gottfried Hugelmann, ed., *Das Nationalitätenrecht des alten Österreich* (Vienna, 1934), 162-169. See also Kann, *The Multi-national Empire*, 1: 201-202.

⁷⁴ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 15 June 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 454, n. 880).

⁷⁵ Ibid., 31 October 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 497-499; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 104).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 5 June 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 514-515; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 107). The

correct in his view that the "pacification" of Bohemia required an "absolutist regime" there. However, Aehrenthal was less optimistic than Schwarzenberg "that Taaffe will arouse himself to resolute action."⁷⁷ In Aehrenthal's opinion, "energy is not a characteristic of Taaffe's personality."⁷⁸

Return to Russia

Actually, Aehrenthal no longer was in Vienna when the conference between Czechs and Germans opened in that city in January 1890. After four years in Vienna, Aehrenthal had been assigned to St. Petersburg as first secretary (*erster diplomatischer Beamter*) of the embassy and chargé d'affaires in April 1888, with his promotion to legation counselor first class following in January 1889.⁷⁹ His new assignment was a mark of distinction for the thirty-four-year-old diplomat and an extraordinary sign of Kálnoky's confidence in him, since relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia were tense at the time. In effect, Aehrenthal acted as de facto head of the embassy at St. Petersburg for several months in place of the ambassador, Count Anton Wolkenstein, who was forced by a grave illness to take an extended leave of absence.

Even after his return, it took a long time before Wolkenstein could fully resume his duties. Aehrenthal therefore continued to play a prominent role in the affairs of the embassy. The arrangement worked well because Aehrenthal, as noted earlier, was on very good terms with Wolkenstein.⁸⁰ Despite the professional recognition, Aehrenthal had not been eager to return to Russia, as we learn from a letter to his father:

If I had to leave here, I would have preferred a different post, but I have no right to a preference and I can only be deeply grateful for this latest proof of the benevolence and confidence of my chief. In the state service, one is, in the end, also a soldier and has to obey orders. However, I am not concealing from myself that I am being placed in a difficult and exposed post. Also, from the point of view of the great distance from the parental house, I am not especially happy at this change. This drawback, however, is inseparably tied to the diplomatic service.⁸¹

letter reports a conversation Aehrenthal had with Schwarzenberg in Vienna "on Derby day," before Aehrenthal left for St. Petersburg.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ *Jahrbuch des K. u. K. Auswärtigen Dienstes* (Vienna, 1910), 197-198.

⁸⁰ See 126-127 above.

⁸¹ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Vienna, 14 April 1888 (Adlgasser, 1: 403-404).

The large number of reports that Aehrenthal sent to the Ballhausplatz and the detailed instructions and private letters that he received reveal his influential position at the embassy in St. Petersburg. He was entrusted with conducting delicate negotiations such as those for the conclusion of a commercial treaty with Russia. His interpretation of events in Russia carried considerable weight in the Ballhausplatz. Where Russia, the Balkans, and Turkey were concerned, Aehrenthal was considered an expert.⁸²

Aehrenthal's initial impressions of Russian conditions after an absence of five years were very positive. In an unbelievably short time, Russia appeared to have extricated itself from what appeared to be a hopelessly confused situation.

Undeniably, Russia today is powerful [and] imperious to a degree...that has not been the case since Tsar Nicholas [I]. And yet it is only seven years since Russia appeared to have fallen into anarchy.⁸³

Aehrenthal attributed the favorable situation largely to the fact that Russian nationalism associated with Slavophilism had imbued the tsarist state with new and active forces. Tsar Alexander III was the embodiment of this nationalist current:

There is no denying that the personal antipathy of the tsar to everything foreign, particularly German, and the policy of the government directed against foreigners has contributed not a little to raising the popularity of the autocrat and to reconciling the masses at least partly to the principle of autocracy.⁸⁴

When Tsar Alexander died in October 1894, Aehrenthal wrote a remarkably friendly obituary for the *Fremdenblatt*, the semiofficial organ of the Ballhausplatz.⁸⁵ The favorable assessment of Alexander's reign was based, in part, on

⁸² The diplomatic correspondence between Aehrenthal and Kálnoky, which includes a large number of private diplomatic letters (*Privatschreiben*) is in HHStA, PA X (Russland)/85–101. On the commercial treaty see *ibid.*, NA/2, Kálnoky to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 14 December 1893 (Wank, 1: No. 43). See also SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 14 July and 9 August 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 521–523; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: Nos. 109, 112). The personal correspondence between Kálnoky and Aehrenthal has been published in Wank, part 1.

⁸³ HHStA, PA X/89, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 35C, 15 May 1889. See Wittram, "Die russisch-nationalen Tendenzen der achtziger Jahre," 183–213.

⁸⁴ Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, 15 May 1889 (same as n. 83 above). On Slavophilism see Michael T. Florinsky, *Russia: A History and an Interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York, 1953), 2: 809–810, 1086–1087, 1089–1090.

⁸⁵ Karel Kramář, the Young Czech political leader, claims that the obituary led to Aehrenthal's

Aehrenthal's perceptions of the salutary effects of the tsar's reactionary domestic policy in combating "the revolutionary party," which perhaps reflected Aehrenthal's own anxiety about revolutionary currents in Austria-Hungary.⁸⁶ The obituary also was motivated by Aehrenthal's desire to further the Austro-Russian rapprochement that had begun in the last years of Alexander's reign despite the anti-Austrian attitudes of the tsar.⁸⁷ Among other things, the tsar resented what he regarded as Austro-Hungarian obstruction of Russian efforts to convert the former Turkish province of Bulgaria into a Russian puppet state after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878.⁸⁸

In the course of his residence in St. Petersburg, however, Aehrenthal's positive impression of the immediate situation gave way to a more negative assessment of Russia's future prospects. Nationalism, or better, "chauvinism," despite its short-term bracing effect, was not sufficient to renew the whole vast body of the Russian Empire.⁸⁹ Aehrenthal saw Russian nationalism, especially as it was expressed in efforts to Russify the Baltic provinces, Finland, and Poland, eventually becoming an element of destruction. "The unique vitality of the Russian state, its hostile cultural efforts, are only symptoms of disease which point to the process of self-destruction which threatens to afflict Russia."⁹⁰ He saw the measures against the German schools in the Baltic

having been lionized in conservative Russian circles. Karel Kramář, *Paměti* [Recollections], Karel Hoch, ed. (Prague, 1940), 238–239. No doubt, the obituary did enhance Aehrenthal's standing with Russian conservatives, but his standing among that group was extremely good before its publication. On Kramář's relations with Aehrenthal see chapter 6 below. Wolkenstein, to whom Aehrenthal sent a copy of the obituary and who shared Aehrenthal's pro-Russian orientation, responded approvingly: "It is without doubt a rewarding task to intercede energetically in behalf of the truth in a moment such as the present. You have done it and thereby have acquired great merit. It is high time that your example finds imitation." HH-StA, NA/4, Wolkenstein to Aehrenthal, St. Petersburg, 15 November 1894 (Wank, 1: No. 48).

86 The quoted words are in SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 31 March 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 448–449). Aehrenthal attributed student restlessness to the "revolutionary party," for which "the moment appears to have come for it to raise its head again." *Ibid.* On Aehrenthal's fear of revolution see 112–118 above.

87 On Austro-Russian rapprochement, see chapter 5 below.

88 See 131 above. Tsar Alexander also resented Vienna's support for the Catholic clergy in the Polish portions of Russia and what he regarded as Austria-Hungary's exploitation of Russia's political and military embarrassment in the Russo-Turkish War to its own advantage. See Florinsky, *Russia*, 2: 1135.

89 HHStA, PA X/91, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 18 September 1889. The quoted word is in the letter in which Aehrenthal reports statements made by the moderate Russian foreign minister, Nicholas Giers, in a conversation with him. Giers lamented the dangers posed by chauvinistic currents, especially in the Russian press.

90 *Ibid.*, 92, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 10F confidential, 5 February 1890.

provinces "as a piece of vandalism which destroys the cultural work of centuries."⁹¹ The Russian schools that the government wanted to put in their place had, according to Aehrenthal, created in Russia "nothing but superficial culture and nihilism."⁹² Drawing no doubt on the experience of his homeland, Aehrenthal acutely predicted that the Lithuanians and Estonians in the Baltic provinces, at the time allies of the government against the Baltic Germans, would "during the struggle against the Germans...have made further progress in their national and social development" and would not let themselves be so easily Russified in the future.⁹³

The misery produced by the bad harvest of 1891, which Aehrenthal attributed "to the defects in the economic development of Russia," prompted the following doleful observation:

It is the old story: the Russian Empire is big and wide, its resources are significant, but order is lacking — the Russian race, at least as presently constituted, appears not to be capable of a higher cultural development.⁹⁴

It struck Aehrenthal as "peculiar" that "one cannot see a more withering critique of social conditions here than that in theatrical performances," but few of the Russians who saw them perceived the "pathological" nature of those conditions.⁹⁵

Aehrenthal apparently saw no contradiction between his critical analysis of Russian conditions and his praise of the autocratic system that produced them. As in the Habsburg Monarchy, Aehrenthal looked to the traditional elites and dynastic institutions to generate reforms.⁹⁶ Such a perspective obscured the fact that both were obstacles to the kinds of reforms that Russia and Austria-Hungary needed to make them viable modern states.

From his post in the Russian capital, Aehrenthal kept one eye focused on politics in his homeland. As we know, he closely followed the Czech-German compromise negotiations, and became "depressed" at the "scandalous events" in Hungary surrounding the celebration of the ninetieth birthday of Louis Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian revolt against the Habsburgs in 1848 — conferral on him of the freedom of the city of Budapest, a large commemorative

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 88, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 65B, 14 November 1888.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 15 September 1891 (Adlgasser, 1: 482–483; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 95).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 6 March 1891.

⁹⁶ See 86–87 above, the concluding section, "Political Anxiety and Anti-Semitism," of chapter 3, and chapter 5 below.

parade in his honor, and praises sung by orators and poets, recalling the heroic revolutionary days.⁹⁷ "It is especially sad," he wrote to his father, "to have to live through the reflex effects of Magyar chauvinism in Russia."⁹⁸ He reported to Kálnoky that some Russian newspapers "say it is like 1848 all over again," and that the Russian newspapers "are unanimous that the events in Pest [Budapest] amount to a weakening of the internal position of Austria-Hungary and a shaking of the Triple Alliance."⁹⁹ He drew some comfort from the thought the "scandal" would open the eyes of the emperor to the consequences "of his too great mildness and consideration."¹⁰⁰ He hoped that the emperor would see the necessity of acting energetically to halt separatist tendencies and defend the authority of the crown not only in Hungary, but in Austria as well.¹⁰¹

The great distance between St. Petersburg and Vienna did not lessen Aehrenthal's opposition to Taaffe, which if anything had increased by 1893. Aehrenthal was sharply critical of Taaffe's plan to create a fifth electoral curia enfranchising most of the working and lower classes as a way of stealing the democratic thunder of socialist and radical national parties. Even though the proposed franchise reform would preserve the curia system, Aehrenthal feared that it "would shake the foundations of the state,"¹⁰² undermining the conservative social order and Slavicizing Bohemia and Austria, with the latter development leading to conflict with Russia.

The possibility of a conflict with Russia arising out of a recasting of Austria along Slavic lines was the main thrust of a long report by Aehrenthal in October 1893. In that report, Aehrenthal claimed that Tsar Alexander III and ruling circles in Russia were opposed equally to radical Slavophile and Pan-Slavic designs, both of which had revolutionary overtones. Yet the prestige of the Romanov dynasty and Russian nationalism were tied to Russia's position as the only Slavic great power and protector of the Slavs and Orthodox Christians. For that reason, Russia desired that the German element in Austria remain strong to prevent Austria from becoming a Slavic power and bringing it into conflict with Russia. According to Aehrenthal, one of the reasons Russia helped Austria in 1848–1849 was to bolster "the miserably declining power of the German element." What Aehrenthal perceived as Taaffe's policy of Slavicization of Austria had threatening consequences for Russia and, by making

97 See 97–98 above and May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 346.

98 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 31 October 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 497–499; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 104).

99 HHStA, PA X/98, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 82H, 27 October 1892.

100 Aehrenthal to his father, 31 October 1892 (same as n. 98 above).

101 Ibid. See also 87–88 above.

102 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 27 October 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 526–528; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 118).

close Austro-Russian relations impossible, removed one of the strongest defenses against revolutionary currents at home and abroad.¹⁰³

Aehrenthal's report was sent to Taaffe, who read and signed it.¹⁰⁴ What effect the report had on him is unknown, but whatever the effect, it mattered little. Shortly after returning the report, although certainly not because of it, Taaffe's government, under fire from many sides and deserted even by the Feudal Conservatives, who were opposed to Taaffe's precipitous introduction of an electoral reform bill, finally fell at the end of October 1893.¹⁰⁵

Aehrenthal placed great hopes in Taaffe's successor, Prince Alfred Windischgraetz, who formed a coalition cabinet based on the support of the German liberals, clerical conservatives, and Polish deputies.¹⁰⁶ Alas, the Windischgraetz government proved incapable of dealing with the problem of franchise reform and nationality conflicts, and it collapsed in 1895.¹⁰⁷

Aehrenthal took heart from what he heard from Russian officials about the decline in influence of the pan-Slavic idea — "i.e., the concern for the Slavic brothers" — since the death of its leading figures and as a consequence of the disappointing experiences of the Russo-Turkish war and later Balkan events.¹⁰⁸ The weakening of pan-Slavism augured well for Austro-Russian rapprochement. On the other hand, Aehrenthal viewed the growing friendship between Russia and France with a not completely convincing air of detachment. Despite the aversion of Tsar Alexander and the court to republican ideas, alarm at the trend of German policy after Bismarck's dismissal in 1890 (e.g., failure to renew the 1887 treaty with Russia and anti-Russian maneuvers of German bankers) and financial necessity moved Russia closer to France.¹⁰⁹ Aehrenthal cor-

103 HHStA, PA X/101, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 77C, 12 October 1893.

104 Ibid.

105 Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 292–303.

106 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 18 November 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 530–531; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 121).

107 On the Windischgraetz government see in general May, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, 322–324.

108 See, for example, Aehrenthal's report of his conversation with the Russian foreign minister in September 1889 (n. 89 above). Nicholas Giers, the foreign minister, saw pan-Slavism being pushed into the background by a specific Russian nationalism or pan-Russianism (ibid.). Aehrenthal does not name the leading figures in his report, but in an earlier letter he pointed to the "disorganization of the national party" as a result of an absence of leadership after the deaths of General Michael Skobelev, Ivan Aksakov, and Michael Katkov. HHStA, PA X/88, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, Pvl., 24 November 1888.

109 Florinsky, *Russia*, 2: 1136–1139. On the Franco-Russian alliance, see George F. Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia, and the Coming of the First World War* (New York, 1984); on the origins of the alliance see 18–36. Russo-German relations were not very cordial even under Bismarck. Commenting on them in 1888, Aehrenthal wrote, "Moreover, there is no doubt that Russian chauvinism has been somewhat intimidated by the political and economic blows of Prince Bismarck. The need for an armistice has manifested itself here [St.

rectly saw that the relationship between France and Russia was strengthened by, among other things, the suspicion of Germany that prevailed in influential Russian circles and the popularity of France outside the court.¹¹⁰

At the end of July 1891, a French naval squadron paid a visit to the Russian naval base at Kronstadt, setting off two weeks of frenzied public festivities, the likes of which had not been seen before in St. Petersburg or indeed anywhere in Russia.¹¹¹ Tsar Alexander went down to the harbor to welcome the French visitors in person, an extraordinary act on the part of a ruler who disdained public appearances.¹¹² The French warships made a favorable impression on Aehrenthal, "less so the noisy, undignified behavior of the Russian public."¹¹³ The playing of the "Marseillaise," a revolutionary hymn, at many public demonstrations struck Aehrenthal as paradoxical in the land of autocracy. Even more paradoxical, in view of Alexander III's father having been murdered by revolutionaries in 1881, was the tsar's standing bareheaded at a gala court dinner for the senior French naval officers "while the orchestra played the 'Marseillaise' — the marching song ... of those who, a hundred years before, had beheaded a king."¹¹⁴ Aehrenthal saw the tsar's gesture as an evil omen for the tsarist empire. In a sullen mood he wrote to his father that

it would be wrong for us to hint that the Russian-French orgy has led to a change in high politics (*grosse Politik*) and consequently in the relations between governments. If the emperor of Russia considers it undangerous to permit his people to demonstrate for republican and atheistic France to the strains of the *Marseillaise*, that is his business. In my view, he is mistaken, but, as I have said, that does not concern us.¹¹⁵

Petersburg] especially in the economic sphere." Bismarck, however, maintained that "the personality structure of the tsar necessitated a pathological treatment, and he persisted in his method." HHStA, PA X/87, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 39A confidential, 29 June 1888. Such treatment greatly irritated the tsar. Ibid., 91, Wolkenstein to Kálnoky, Pvl., very secret, 17 December 1889.

110 HHStA, PA X/92, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 47, 10 September 1890. Although a recent visit by Emperor William II to the Russian maneuvers at Narva came off better than expected, Aehrenthal warned that it would not appreciably reduce the suspicion of Germany in high court and government circles. On the pro-French attitude of the public, see *ibid.*, 94, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, R. 45B, 7 August 1891.

111 Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance*, 97-99.

112 See the brief but incisive character sketch of Alexander III in *ibid.*, 6-9.

113 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 7 August 1891 (Adlgasser, 1: 481, n. 943; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 92).

114 The quoted words are Kennan's, from *The Fateful Alliance*, 98.

115 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 16 August 1891 (Adlgasser, 1: 481-482; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 93).

In fact, the Franco-Russian military convention of 1892 followed by a formal alliance in 1894 concerned Aehrenthal very much. Despite his awareness of the importance of this development, Aehrenthal tended to ignore the Franco-Russian alliance as an obstacle to closer Austro-Russian relations. Even after its conclusion, the alliance seemed somewhat improbable and fateful for Russia and Europe. In that vein, he wrote to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg,

What have you to say about the autocrat whose rule collapses without the support of the Church embracing the president [Félix Faure] of the atheistic republic. A very promising outlook for the twentieth century!¹¹⁶

For years, he harbored the hope that the extreme conservative feelings of the tsar and the Russian ruling elite would lead to a loosening of the bond with the "impressionable and vain French."¹¹⁷

By the late fall of 1893, Count Wolkenstein's health had improved to the point where he was fully able to resume his ambassadorial duties, and Aehrenthal returned to Vienna in February 1894 with the rank of minister plenipotentiary, achieving in sixteen years what on average took over twenty.¹¹⁸ In a letter to Aehrenthal, Wolkenstein informed his former deputy that in an audience with Emperor Francis Joseph,

His Majesty spoke of your accomplishments in St. Petersburg with great warmth and much emphasis and stressed the necessity of opening up for you as soon as possible a completely independent field of activity.¹¹⁹

No doubt Aehrenthal was pleased by the praise, but for the time being he was happy to return to Vienna and resume his role as Kálnoky's right-hand man. After five years in Russia, Aehrenthal had experienced the same oppressive feelings that his first long stay there had engendered.¹²⁰ He did not remain in Vienna for long. Kálnoky's resignation a year and a half after his return led to his acquiring his first "completely independent field of activity" as envoy to Romania.

¹¹⁶ SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, 12 November 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 202).

¹¹⁷ Ibid. See chapter 5 below.

¹¹⁸ *Jahrbuch des K. u. K. Auswärtigen Dienstes* (Vienna, 1910), 197–198.

¹¹⁹ HHStA, NA/4, Wolkenstein to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 30 November 1893.

¹²⁰ "I have made up my mind...to give up my post next spring. It will be five years that I have endured this difficult and especially very expensive land for a second time; I believe that is enough." SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 8 December 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 500–501).

The Resignation of Kálnoky

Kálnoky's resignation deeply affected Aehrenthal. "You can imagine how closely the May [1895] events have touched me," he wrote to a friend.¹²¹ The role of the Hungarians in the resignation of his "revered chief" increased his hostility toward the Magyars, which had developed since the 1880s in response to Hungarian separatist demands and attacks in the Hungarian delegation on Kálnoky's foreign policy as not sufficiently tough with regard to Russia. The clash between Kálnoky and the Hungarian government revolved around an alleged infringement by the Hungarian prime minister on the conduct of foreign affairs.¹²²

In 1894–1895, a severe domestic conflict erupted in Hungary. The Liberal government then in power introduced legislation aimed at separating church and state. The reforms with regard to the role of the Catholic Church made civil marriage and birth registry obligatory, legalized divorce, granted Judaism equality with other faiths, and left it to parents in an interfaith marriage to decide what religion their children should follow. These secularization laws were strongly opposed by the Catholic clergy and conservative magnates (high aristocrats) in the upper house of the Hungarian parliament. The laws finally were passed when Emperor Francis Joseph, who had disliked the secularization laws and procrastinated in his support of the Hungarian government, finally put pressure on the magnates to vote for the bills in order to avoid a prolonged crisis.¹²³

As part of the Catholic Church's opposition to the secularization laws, the papal nuncio in Vienna, Monsignor Antonio Agliardi, had traveled through-

121 HHStA, NSch, Aehrenthal to Schiessl, Vienna, 26 June 1895. Franz (since 1909 Baron) von Schiessl was Austro-Hungarian minister at Teheran (1894–1895) and Belgrade (1895–1899) and later chief of Emperor Francis Joseph's civil cabinet.

122 On Kálnoky's resignation see Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "The Resignation of Count Kálnoky as Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister in May 1895," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 11 (October 1951): 259–278. A German translation of the latter is reprinted in Engel-Janosi, *Geschichte auf dem Ballhausplatz: Essays zur österreichischen Aussenpolitik 1830–1945*, Fritz Fellner, ed. (Graz–Vienna–Cologne, 1963), 233–260. All page references are to the English original of the essay. See also Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan 1846–1918*, 2 vols. (Graz–Vienna–Cologne, 1958–1960), 1: 254–294, and, more recently, Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 208–214.

123 On the church reforms and the ensuing conflict see Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan*, 1: 285–286, Moritz Csáky, *Der Kulturkampf in Ungarn: Kirchenpolitische Gesetzgebung der Jahre 1894–1895*. Studien zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, vol. 6 (Graz–Vienna–Cologne, 1967), and May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 343–346. In part, the emperor's procrastination was a sign of his displeasure at what he regarded as the Hungarian cabinet's disloyal attitude at the time of national mourning for Louis Kossuth, the 1848 Hungarian independence fighter who died in 1894.

out Hungary in the early months of 1895, urging their repeal. In response to an interpellation in the Hungarian parliament, Baron Desiderius Bánffy, the prime minister, claimed that the nuncio's utterances constituted unwarranted interference by a foreign representative into Hungary's internal affairs, and that Kálnoky, in agreement with the Hungarian government, would lodge a protest at the Vatican. Kálnoky charged the Hungarian prime minister with making a foreign policy statement without prior consultation with the Ballhausplatz. The foreign minister, who was extremely critical of Agliardi's activities in Hungary, had indeed agreed to lodge a protest, but only after he had received proof of the nuncio's statements, i.e., the texts of his speeches. Since they were not forthcoming, Kálnoky considered Bánffy's announcement premature.¹²⁴

The bitter clash between Bánffy and Kálnoky was a confused one and was fueled by differences unrelated to the liberal reforms. As a conservative aristocrat with clerical leanings, Kálnoky certainly disliked the reforms, but that alone cannot explain the sharpness of the conflict.¹²⁵ Since the mid 1880s the Hungarians had resented what they regarded as Kálnoky's halfhearted resistance to Russian designs in the Balkans.¹²⁶ Furthermore, Bánffy saw the Agliardi issue as a way of demonstrating Hungarian independence of Vienna and the ability of the Hungarians to influence foreign policy, one of the few common concerns of the empire as a whole.¹²⁷ Kálnoky — and Aehrenthal — saw this as a dilution

124 Engel-Janosi, "The Resignation of Count Kálnoky," 270, and *ibid.*, *Österreich und der Vatikan*, 1: 287–290.

125 Engel-Janosi, "The Resignation of Count Kálnoky," 246–247. Descriptions of Kálnoky as a "notorious clerical" and an "ultramontane" are exaggerated. For the former see Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 208; for the latter see Diószegi, *Hungarians in the Ballhausplatz*, 191. Kálnoky certainly saw the Catholic Church and the papacy as an important prop of conservative and monarchical forces, but he was in no way politically subservient to the Catholic Church or the Pope. For a balanced view of Kálnoky's clerical leanings see Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan*, 1: 232–239, 248–249, 255, 269–270, 275, 279, 283. Walter Rauscher's description of Kálnoky as "indeed a strong conservative but not unconditionally clerical" is apt. Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 208. Still, Kálnoky, in the Austro-Italian negotiations leading up to the Triple Alliance of 1882, rejected, out of respect for the Pope in the unsolved Roman question, an Italian proposal to include mutual guarantees of territorial integrity in the treaty. Rauscher maintains that the rejection was a mistake. The mutual territorial guarantees would have excluded all territorial claims and made Italian irredentism illegitimate. Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 34–35. Kálnoky feared that "Italy... would be guaranteed the possession of Rome, to which Austria-Hungary as the leading Catholic power could never agree." Fritz Fellner, *Der Dreibund: Europäische Diplomatie vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, Österreich-Archiv (Vienna–Munich, 1960), 14, reprinted in Fellner, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund*, 19–82, here 25.

126 Engel-Janosi, "The Resignation of Count Kálnoky," 269.

127 *Ibid.*, 244.

of his long-held conception of a commonly conducted foreign policy as an indispensable unifying force for Austria-Hungary.¹²⁸ This, rather than any concrete diplomatic issue, was the heart of the matter for Kálnoky and Aehrenthal. The latter's correspondence at the time of the crisis says nothing about the church laws but focuses almost entirely on the political aspects of the conflict, mainly as they related to the political position of the foreign minister.

While Bánffy and the Hungarian government had acted rather provocatively, Kálnoky was not completely innocent. Not least responsible for Bánffy's combative spirit was Hungarian knowledge of Kálnoky's efforts to install a conservative government in Budapest after the forced resignation of the Liberal cabinet of Alexander Wekerle at the end of December 1894.¹²⁹ Some letters in Aehrenthal's correspondence provide glimpses of Kálnoky's attempt to interfere in Hungarian domestic politics. Commenting on reports from Aehrenthal and Kálnoky at the beginning of December, Count Ladislaus von Szögyény, Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Berlin and a member of the upper house (*Magnatenhaus*) of the Hungarian parliament, wrote that "the *modus procedendi*, which shall now be embarked upon from on high [i.e., use of royal authority] appears to me to be completely correct."¹³⁰ After Wekerle's resignation he urged further use of royal authority. "Even if it engenders attacks from below in the beginning, it had to strengthen still further the so necessary authority of the ruler."¹³¹

From a letter by Aehrenthal to Count Wolkenstein, we learn that Kálnoky and Aehrenthal apparently sought to create a new party that would fuse moderate-liberal and conservative elements and provide greater support for the Compromise of 1867 than that provided by the Liberal Party.¹³² The plan foundered on the unwillingness of Count Karl Khuen-Héderváry, the arch-conservative *Banús* (royal governor) of Croatia, to assume the leadership of a new fusion party and cabinet. According to Aehrenthal, Khuen "believes that his time has not yet come." There was too much confusion and political fragmentation. Perhaps the right time might present itself after the eventual fall of Bánffy, who succeeded Wekerle as prime minister. In the meantime, Khuen expected that "the fusion idea would...embrace ever wider circles and presumably make possible a new grouping of the parties."¹³³ Szögyény thought that

¹²⁸ Ibid., 245.

¹²⁹ See in general Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan*, 1: 286 and Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 208

¹³⁰ HHStA, NA/4, Szögyény to Aehrenthal, Berlin, 8 December 1894 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 133).

¹³¹ Ibid., 4 January 1895 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 134).

¹³² Ibid., Botschaftsarchiv Paris, Fascicle 615A, Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, Vienna, 30 January 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 52). In October 1894, Wolkenstein was appointed ambassador to France.

¹³³ Ibid.

the latter was absolutely necessary to rid Hungarian politics of "the harmful and until now dominating [Liberal] elements."¹³⁴

Aehrenthal, who in a letter to Wolkenstein spoke cryptically of the conflict as "premeditated" and as a "disloyal ... coup,"¹³⁵ helped to intensify the crisis by writing a sharply worded statement that appeared anonymously on 3 May 1895 in the semiofficial foreign ministry organ *Politische Correspondenz*.¹³⁶ In censorious tones, the communiqué denied that Bánffy's statement in the Hungarian parliament agreed with Kálnoky's views and criticized the Hungarian prime minister for his unwarranted interference into foreign affairs, which had caused great difficulties for the Ballhausplatz. The communiqué, which Kálnoky probably allowed to be published out of pique, served to inflame the crisis.¹³⁷

As conditions for settling the crisis, the Hungarian government demanded (1) the immediate transmittal to the Vatican of the protest against Monsignor Agliardi's activities in Hungary; and (2) an explanation of the communiqué in the *Politische Correspondenz*. With the prospect of a new crisis in Hungary if Baron Bánffy did not receive some satisfaction, Kálnoky, according to Aehrenthal, chose to resign rather than "take any steps down the steep incline of compromise and humiliation" that would only weaken the office of the foreign minister.¹³⁸ Kálnoky took it as his duty to hold fast to those principles, which until then had governed the conduct of foreign affairs, and to transfer the ministry to his successor "intact."¹³⁹ Aehrenthal no doubt agreed with Szögyény that the only honorable way out of the crisis would have been "first of all that the foreign minister would be recognized not only as such, but as the foremost guardian and representative of all common interests of the monarchy and would receive the necessary guarantees in this regard."¹⁴⁰

134 Szögyény to Aehrenthal, 4 January 1895 (same as n. 131 above).

135 HHStA, Botschaftsarchiv Paris, Fascicle 615A, Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, Vienna, 3 May 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 59).

136 Plener, *Erinnerungen*, 3: 247–248. See also the unpublished memoirs of General Eduard von Steinitz in KA, Nachlass Steinitz. A copy of the communiqué is appended to the document cited in n. 138 below.

137 See the works of Plener and Steinitz cited in n. 136 above. See also Engel-Janosi, "The Resignation of Count Kálnoky," 272.

138 HHStA, Botschaftsarchiv Paris, Fascicle 615A, Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, Vienna, 13 May 1895, very secret and personal (Wank, 1: No. 62). Typical of his anti-Semitic thinking at the time, Aehrenthal assigned a vague and contributory role in Kálnoky's downfall to the "Jewish press" of Budapest (*ibid.*). A copy of Aehrenthal's statement is attached to his letter to Wolkenstein.

139 *Ibid.*

140 HHStA, NA/4, Szögyény to Aehrenthal, Berlin, 8 May 1895 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 139).

Emperor Francis Joseph obviously had not followed Szögyény's political prescription of ever greater doses of royal power as a cure for the situation. The day after Kálnoky's resignation, Aehrenthal wrote to Wolkenstein,

Consummatum est! Count Kálnoky has been sacrificed to the conspiracy of a government which was duty-bound to support him and to the weakness of the monarch who has in the past repeatedly purchased momentary relief by abandoning principles and the most reliable pillars of the throne ... However one wants to twist and turn the matter, one thing remains certain: one of the saddest episodes in our history was executed yesterday.¹⁴¹

Monsignor Agliardi also departed. After the crisis died down and a suitable period had elapsed, the nuncio was recalled in July 1896.¹⁴² Surely, a number of things led to Emperor Francis Joseph's desertion of his loyal foreign minister. In view of the strained relations between the monarch and the Hungarian government, there is some truth to the observation of Prince Karl Max Lichnowsky, secretary of the German embassy in Vienna, "that the monarch may have been influenced by the consideration that it will be easier to find a new foreign minister than a new Hungarian minister-president."¹⁴³

The Kálnoky-Agliardi affair found an echo in the Wahrmund affair, which took place when Aehrenthal was foreign minister. Ludwig Wahrmund, a professor of canon law at the University of Innsbruck, delivered a number of anticlerical lectures in 1907, which led to the outbreak of riots and a political storm that raged throughout 1908. Monsignor Gennaro Belmonte, the papal nuncio, played an active role in the opposition to Wahrmund, for which Aehrenthal upbraided him rather severely. Eventually, after prickly negotiations with Rome, Belmonte was recalled. Perhaps Aehrenthal's irritability throughout the Wahrmund affair was fueled by painful memories associated with the earlier one.¹⁴⁴

141 Ibid., Botschaftsarchiv Paris, Fascicle 615A, Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, Vienna, 17 May 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 63).

142 Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan*, 1: 297–299.

143 Prince Karl Max Lichnowsky to [Chancellor] Prince Chlodwig Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Report No. 97, Vienna 5 May 1895. The document is included among the microfilmed German records deposited in NatArchive, Reel 223, Oesterreich 86, No. 2, Oesterreichische Staatmänner. A copy of Aehrenthal's "provocative" communiqué criticizing the Hungarian prime minister (see 149 above) is appended to the report.

144 Ibid., 86–103. The Wahrmund Affair will be treated fully in chapter 7 of volume two of this biography (in preparation). See also Richard Schober, "Belmonte und Aehrenthal: Österreichisch-Vatikanische Beziehungen im Schatten der Wahrmundaffäre," *MÖSTA* 27 (1974): 295–336.

Minister to Romania

Aehrenthal's bitter commentary on Kálnoky's resignation was more than just an expression of personal solidarity. In the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic service, Kálnoky was considered indispensable. He was regarded as having conducted Austro-Hungarian affairs brilliantly, and after Bismarck's resignation in 1890, he was considered the leading statesman in Central Europe. This laudatory view of Kálnoky's post-Bismarckian position is somewhat exaggerated. According to Walter Rauscher, whose study of Kálnoky's foreign policy is generally positive, the leadership role in the Triple Alliance never materialized. The Wilhelmstrasse may have lacked strong leadership after Bismarck's departure, but it was not about to cede leadership of the alliance to Vienna.¹⁴⁵ Kálnoky's replacement by the relatively young and unknown Polish magnate Count Agenor Gołuchowski, whose diplomatic experience abroad was rather narrow to boot — he had never served in London or St. Petersburg, and in Berlin only for a year as a young attaché — stimulated uneasiness and concern among senior Austro-Hungarian diplomats.¹⁴⁶ Left unmentioned was the fact that Gołuchowski had served in the sensitive post of minister to Romania from 1887 until 1894.

Gołuchowski was aware of the skepticism aroused by his appointment. It was in part to quiet the concerns of the senior diplomats and officials and gain their cooperation that he offered Aehrenthal the important position of first section chief, for which Aehrenthal was in any event eminently qualified. Undoubtedly, the offer of the second-highest post in the foreign ministry to Kálnoky's closest associate, who enjoyed great prestige among senior Austro-Hungarian diplomats, was meant to assure the skeptics that Kálnoky's principles and policies, especially the positive approach to Russian relations, would be continued.¹⁴⁷ To the despair of his friends and of colleagues in the

¹⁴⁵ Kálnoky's attempt to take over the leadership role in the Triple Alliance failed "because the people in the Wilhelmstrasse, despite temporary disorientation, never thought to champion the interests of the Habsburg Empire in the Balkans, and moreover, [they] did not have a very high estimation of the military strength of the Danubian Monarchy." Rauscher, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*, 222.

¹⁴⁶ For further information on the mood of Habsburg diplomats after the appointment of Gołuchowski see HHStA, NA/4, Wolkenstein to Aehrenthal, Paris, 20 May and 6 June 1895, and *ibid.*, Botschaftsarchiv Paris, Fascicle 615A, Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, Vienna, 24 May 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 64). See also Lützow, *Im diplomatischen Dienst*, 75–76, and Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 211–212.

¹⁴⁷ Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, 24 May 1895 (same as in n. 146 above). The first section chief, roughly analogous to the under secretary of state in the British Foreign Office, supervised the political departments of the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry and represented the foreign minister in the latter's absence. As a rule, the first section chief could count on

Ballhausplatz, Aehrenthal turned down the offer. The formal grounds he gave were that his eyes might not take the strain and that his close relationship with Kálnoky would create difficulties for the new minister. While the latter was in part true, a deeper reason was expressed in a letter to Wolkenstein:

I could not square it with my feelings that I remain in the ministry in a leading position after what happened ... It is an utterly sad and oppressive feeling to have to sit here in the gray house [the foreign ministry] and continually remember that Count Kálnoky no longer is the leader.¹⁴⁸

Instead, Aehrenthal, at the beginning of November 1895, accepted with Kálnoky's blessing the post of Austro-Hungarian minister to Romania, a position held by three of the last six Habsburg foreign ministers.¹⁴⁹ Prince Franz Liechtenstein, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Russia, expressed the disappointment of senior diplomats and Ballhausplatz officials who saw in Aehrenthal's remaining in Vienna a guarantee of continuity:

The more probable it becomes that you will receive a [foreign] post in the fall and are lost to all of us in the ministry, the more painful and irreplaceable your loss appears to us. And that is not only my, Pallavicini's and Mensdorff's feeling, it is also what [Russian foreign minister] Lobanov says.¹⁵⁰

Gołuchowski's letter to Emperor Francis Joseph recommending Aehrenthal for the Bucharest post attests to Aehrenthal's high standing as a Habsburg diplomat. Gołuchowski wrote that Aehrenthal was a man

receiving the next free ambassadorial post. Matsch, *Geschichte des Auswärtigen Dienstes*, 96–98.

148 Aehrenthal to Wolkenstein, 24 May 1895 (same as in n. 146 above).

149 The three were Gołuchowski, Aehrenthal, and Ottokar Czernin (1913–1916 in Bucharest, and foreign minister 1916–1918). Kálnoky saw his protégé's appointment as only a steppingstone to a higher position: "As far as your going there [Bucharest] is concerned, I am pleased about that and consider it very useful for you to have spent a few years in the Balkan peninsula, even if there are pleasanter places and people than you will find there. However, you will be able to derive diverse benefits from this for your future." HHStA, NA/2, Kálnoky to Aehrenthal, Schloss Prödlitz/Brodek, 27 October 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 75). Prödlitz was a Kálnoky family estate in Moravia.

150 HHStA, NA/3, Liechtenstein to Aehrenthal, St. Petersburg, 8 June 1895. Margrave Johann Pallavicini, later ambassador to Turkey (1906–1918), was then secretary of the embassy in St. Petersburg and became Aehrenthal's successor in 1899 as minister to Romania. Count Albert Mensdorff, later ambassador to England (1904–1914), was then a legation secretary in the St. Petersburg embassy.

who seems to me to be in every respect the best person for this politically highly important post. Baron Aehrenthal ... as Your Majesty knows, is one of the most capable and experienced officials in the diplomatic corps ... His talent, his tact, his rich political experience as well as his other personal qualities fill me with confidence that he will fill the post in Bucharest with honor and success.¹⁵¹

Gołuchowski's lavish praise of Aehrenthal as well as the offer of the first section chief's post hardly presaged their later acrimonious conflict. Indeed, the relations between the two men, helped along by Gołuchowski's geniality, remained cordial for several years. While concrete political differences over foreign and domestic issues led to strained relations between them after 1898, Aehrenthal's letter to Wolkenstein quoted above suggests that quite apart from specific differences, the mere fact that Gołuchowski succeeded the revered Kálmoky was enough to implant a seed of antagonism in Aehrenthal toward his new chief. All of that lay in the future. In the meantime, Aehrenthal contentedly left Vienna in November 1895 to take up his first assignment as an independent head of mission in Bucharest.¹⁵²

Before leaving for Bucharest, Aehrenthal was instrumental in the creation of a new organizational structure within the foreign ministry — the *Cabinet des Ministres* (CdM) — usually thought of as having been Gołuchowski's idea.¹⁵³ As we have seen, Aehrenthal, as a young diplomat, became convinced of the need for the foreign minister to assume the role of an imperial chancellor de facto, if not de jure. With that idea in mind, it may be assumed that Aehrenthal's aim was to create a de facto imperial chancellery as a structure that would allow a de facto imperial chancellor to exert significant influence on the internal affairs of Austria and Hungary as well as to conduct the empire's foreign policy. Aehrenthal's idea of the CdM went beyond an earlier version of the foreign minister's personal secretariat, called the *Präsidialsektion*, to include constitutional questions and continuous contact with the governments in Vienna and Budapest.¹⁵⁴ Supervision of the operations of the CdM and its staff

151 HHStA, AR, Fach 4, Personalia/5 Aehrenthal, Dienst-Beschreibung, Gołuchowski to Emperor Francis Joseph, No. 45724.2, 5 November 1895.

152 Aehrenthal was quite satisfied with the appointment. He wrote to his mother that "Bucharest ... pleases me very much; one will be able to live here." SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bucharest, 19 November 1895 (Adlgasser, 1: 573, n. 1145).

153 On this point see Somogyi, *Der gemeinsame Ministerrat*, 107.

154 On the prehistory of the CdM see *ibid.*, 98–109 and Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen," 72–82. The main tasks of the CdM were as follows: handling all of the minister's correspondence that was not purely official and all matters in which the foreign minister wanted to exert personal influence; dealing with all matters that came up for discussion in the common ministers council, as well as the correspondence with the Austrian and Hungarian governments; preparing for the annual meet-

was vested in an official called the *chef-de-cabinet*; its first chief was Kajetan von Mérey, later first section chief and ambassador to Italy.¹⁵⁵ The establishment of the CdM, together with other structural reforms made by Aehrenthal after he became foreign minister to breathe new life into the organization of the Ballhausplatz, "created that instrument that in 1914, at least was capable of a deliberate decision, even if a catastrophic one."¹⁵⁶

In the Romanian capital, Aehrenthal quickly succeeded in establishing himself as the leading foreign diplomat. He did all that he could to bolster the tenuous alliance relationship between Austria-Hungary and Romania, the fourth, "silent," partner in the Triple Alliance. He arranged a visit of Emperor Francis Joseph to Romania, the first official court visit of a reigning emperor to that country. He could not, however, persuade the Romanian government to take an unequivocal position on the alliance by publicly acknowledging, instead of constantly denying, its existence. He saw the denial, in part, as a consequence of repressive Magyarization policies in Transylvania.¹⁵⁷

As minister at Bucharest, Aehrenthal was in the middle of the Hungarian–Romanian tempest over Transylvania. Many of his reports warn of the necessity of curbing Magyar nationalism, which was damaging Austro-Hungarian prestige and policy in Romania. He made periodic trips to Transylvania "in order to learn about relations [there]" as well as excursions to the area adjacent to it in Romania.¹⁵⁸ Repeatedly, he recommended that the rigid Magyar

ings of the Austrian and Hungarian delegations held alternately in Vienna and Budapest; looking through all of the diplomatic documents brought to Vienna daily by political couriers and selecting those documents to be brought directly to the attention of the foreign minister and the emperor. See Somogyi, *Der gemeinsame Ministerrat*, 108 and Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 135–136.

155 Rumpler, "Die rechtlich-organisatorischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen," 81.

156 Ibid., 82.

157 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 63. On Aehrenthal's diplomatic mission in Bucharest see *ibid.*, 53–73. Musulin was an attaché to the legation at the time. He states that Aehrenthal "was considered as the most capable Austro-Hungarian diplomat" (*ibid.*, 56). See also Szilácssy, *Der Untergang der Donaumonarchie*, 122–137. Baron Julius von Szilácssy, a career diplomat and Ballhausplatz official, served for two years under Aehrenthal in Bucharest as an unpaid attaché. He states that few diplomats possessed Aehrenthal's "diplomatic skill and finesse" (*ibid.*, 126). He describes Aehrenthal "as one of the most pleasant of chiefs one could imagine [and] the only one of his many superiors from whom he learned something" (*ibid.*). Aehrenthal's "fatherly" relation to Szilácssy was typical of his relations to those below him, especially younger diplomats (see 70 above).

158 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Sinaia, 16 August 1896 (Adlgasser, 2: 619–620). See also *ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, Sinaia 12 October 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 664–665). Another letter contains news of a visit to the Black Sea port city of Constanța where he was impressed by the rapid construction of the harbor; *ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 26 November 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 669–671).

policy of centralism be relaxed, and that some consideration be shown for the national sensitivities of the non-Magyar peoples. He further warned that the insensitive Magyar nationality policy in Transylvania would make it more difficult to negotiate contentious tariff and trade issues in an economic environment marked by a reassertion of protectionism.¹⁵⁹ In 1896, he proposed that the Hungarian government use the millennial celebration of the conquest of the Danubian lands by the Magyars as an occasion to perform a benevolent act by allowing certain Transylvanian émigrés, who, Aehrenthal was convinced, posed no threat to the Hungarian government, to return to the country.¹⁶⁰ He urged that Romanian intellectuals be given more opportunities to participate in Hungarian public life and that more attention be paid to their material needs. He argued that political and cultural concessions would weaken nationalist groups in Bucharest, such as the *Liga pentru Unitatea Culturală a tuturor Românilor* (League for the Cultural Unity of all Romanians).¹⁶¹ In his view, it was really in the interest of the Hungarian government to open up channels for the greater participation of the Transylvanian Romanians in the political life of Hungary. Aehrenthal hoped that this would lead to the formation of a Romanian national party in Transylvania that would be oriented toward winning concessions in Budapest. Such a party would serve as competition for the old National Party, which, in Aehrenthal's view, espoused an intransigent anti-Hungarian policy of restoration of Transylvanian autonomy and complete equality with the Magyars.¹⁶²

Aehrenthal had no illusions that concessions favorable to the Romanians in Transylvania would destroy the Great Romanian ideal, i.e., the inclusion of all Romanians in one state:

159 HHStA, PA XVIII (Rumänien)/128, Aehrenthal to Gólurowski, confidential Pvl., Bucharest, 14 February 1896. On the relations to Romania in the 1890s see Emil Palotas, "Die aussenwirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zum Balkan und zu Russland", in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1914*, vol. 6/1: 609–613.

160 HHStA, PA XVIII/30, Aehrenthal to Gólurowski, confidential Pvl., Bucharest, 14 February 1896. On the problem of the Transylvanian Romanians in Austro-Hungarian–Romanian relations see Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947*. Oxford History of Modern Europe (Oxford, 1994), 202–250; *ibid.*, "Austria–Hungary, Rumania, and the Nationality Problem in Transylvania, 1894–1897," *Rumanian Studies* 4 (1976–1979): 75–126. See also Hitchins, "Die Rumänen," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 3/1: 585–625; Stephen Fischer-Galati, "The Rumanians and the Habsburg Monarchy," *Austrian History Yearbook* 3, part 2 (1967): 430–449; and Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 1: 305–317.

161 On the League see, Hitchins, *Rumania*, 212–213.

162 HHStA, PA XVIII/28, Aehrenthal to Gólurowski, R 20A–C, Bucharest, 23 March 1896 and 17 January 1897. The documents are printed in Hitchins, "Austria–Hungary, Rumania and the Nationality Problem," 121–123 and 124–126, respectively. On the National Party see Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 1: 315.

Even granting far-reaching autonomy to the Hungarian Romanians would not succeed in ending the national agitation here [Romania]. The concessions would be gratefully received here as well as there, to a certain extent, as partial payment and without renunciation of the national ideal.¹⁶³

He argued that concessions would weaken the extreme nationalist group in Bucharest and lessen the pressure on the Romanians in the kingdom to become actively involved with Hungary over the plight of the Romanians in Transylvania.

Externally, Romania had poor relations with Bulgaria and, even more important, with Russia. Aehrenthal believed that Romania's weak internal situation as well as its fear of Russia would incline Bucharest toward Austria-Hungary and the Triple Alliance and perhaps ensure its neutrality in the event of a European conflagration, even if at the same time, Romanian nationalist hatred of Hungary was nourished by repressive Hungarian policies in Transylvania.¹⁶⁴

Aehrenthal characterized the task of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy in Romania as preventing the hatred of Hungary from becoming stronger than the fear of Russia.¹⁶⁵ By the 1890s, repressive Hungarian policies led to the former gaining over the latter, and as Aehrenthal feared, the Romanians in the Habsburg Monarchy began to look outward toward their ethnic kin in the kingdom of Romania. "If the Hungarian policy in Transylvania does not change soon, we are threatened with the loss of our last outpost in the East, Romania."¹⁶⁶ In this, as in other domestic political matters, Aehrenthal was sharply critical of what he regarded as Gołuchowski's pusillanimity in internal political affairs. He wrote to his father that he had to send a "Cassandra note" that was sure to "ruffle feathers" in Vienna and Budapest. He had little hope that Vienna would speak seriously to Budapest about the matter, but in keeping with his strong sense of independence, he asserted that "as long as I am at this exposed post, it is my duty to describe the situation as it is and not as one wishes it to be."¹⁶⁷ In fairness to Gołuchowski, it should be said that he was not as passive as depicted by Aehrenthal. In fact, Gołuchowski agreed "completely with your [Aehrenthal's] statements regarding the Hun-

163 HHStA, PA XVIII/29, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 46A confidential, Sinaia, 3 August 1896.

164 Ibid.

165 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 57.

166 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 8 March 1896 (Adlgasser, 2: 596–597; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 164).

167 Ibid.

garian-Romanian question."¹⁶⁸ He had, as he pointed out to Aehrenthal, resigned as minister to Romania in 1894 out of frustration at his inability "to make his views prevail" in the matter of better treatment for the Romanians in Transylvania.¹⁶⁹ He had sent Aehrenthal's most recent report on the subject to Emperor Francis Joseph and to the Hungarian prime minister Baron Bánffy, and was "determined not to let the subject drop."¹⁷⁰ Characteristically, Gołuchowski counseled patience and avoidance of actions that would intensify the Hungarian-Romanian national conflict.¹⁷¹ In this instance, as in others, Aehrenthal's harsh criticism of Gołuchowski was rooted as much in personality as in political differences.¹⁷²

In Bucharest, too, Aehrenthal was confronted not only by the Magyar-Romanian conflict, but also by the complexity of Austro-Russian relations in the Balkans. He observed the manner in which Russia, using ethnic affinities and the Orthodox Church, extended its influence in the area.¹⁷³ His experience in Bucharest reinforced his view that the only possibility of lasting security for the monarchy lay in "Austria-Hungary and Russia...reconciling their conflicting interests through compromise."¹⁷⁴ With his appointment as ambassador to Russia at the end of 1898, Aehrenthal could work directly toward that goal. King Carol's deep regret at Aehrenthal's departure attests the success of his diplomatic mission in the Romanian capital.¹⁷⁵

168 HHStA, NA/1, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 24 March 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 166).

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid. The report referred to probably is Aehrenthal's report of 23 March. See n. 162 above.

172 See 58-59 and 62-63 above.

173 HHStA, PA XVIII/28, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., Bucharest, 7 March 1896. Printed in Hitchins, "Austria-Hungary, Rumania, and the Nationality Problem," 119-120. See also HHStA, NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Bucharest, 26 February 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 162).

174 HHStA, PA XVIII/29, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 46A confidential, Sinaia, 3 August 1896.

175 HHStA, NA/1, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 9 October 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 439).

IN THE DIPLOMATIC FIRING LINE: AMBASSADOR TO RUSSIA, 1899–1906

When, in the fall of 1898, Prince Franz Liechtenstein resigned as Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Russia, Aehrenthal was the logical choice to replace him. From the point of view of his career, the appointment was a crowning success. Russia was perhaps the most important and difficult Austro-Hungarian diplomatic post. Alexander von Musulin remarks in his memoirs that Russia was the “diplomatic firing line,” and an Austro-Hungarian diplomat without knowledge of Russia was “like a soldier who knows gunfire only from stories that he has read.”¹ From a personal point of view, Aehrenthal’s satisfaction at his appointment was diminished by his father’s death several months earlier, which deprived him of another chance “to make his parents happy.”² Further, as we already know, Aehrenthal was not enthusiastic about the appointment. “I am not especially happy over my third return to the North,” he wrote to his mother.³

In addition to his view of Russia as a generally depressing country, he wrote to his mother that “the political relations and the present leadership [i.e., Gołuchowski] are not suitable for striving for a particular role.”⁴ But in keeping with his strong feelings of loyalty and service to the monarch, Aehrenthal accepted the appointment: “I serve and must go where my emperor sends me. Everything else is immaterial.”⁵

As ambassador in St. Petersburg, Aehrenthal deepened his acquaintance with Russian language and literature and worked to strengthen Austro-Russian relations. His efforts in this regard took several forms. He inspired numerous conciliatory articles on relations between Vienna and St. Petersburg in Austro-Hungarian and Russian newspapers, in which he was energetically assisted by Emil Jettel (1910 Baron) von Ettenach, head of the Literary Bureau (press department) in the Ballhausplatz.⁶ Further, Aehrenthal supported

1 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 85.

2 SAL, RAA/123, Countess Johanna Bylandt-Rheidt [his sister] to Alois Aehrenthal, Cracow, 25 November 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 719). “My first thought was, the good papa! If he had only lived to experience this!”

3 *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bucharest, 25 November 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 721, n. 1473). In her letter cited in note 2 above, Aehrenthal’s sister remarks that she knows that he does not consider himself very fortunate at his appointment, “even though you knew about it for a long time.”

4 *Ibid.*, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bucharest, 13 November 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 718–719; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 456).

5 *Ibid.*

6 HHStA, NA/2, Emil Jettel von Ettenach to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 15 September 1899: “From

Russian studies in the Dual Monarchy, as well as the publication of books on Russian history and Austro-Russian relations, encouraging the efforts of Professor Hans Uebersberger, who founded the East European seminar at the University of Vienna in 1907, and assisted Uebersberger in gathering material for one of his first books on Austro-Russian relations. Uebersberger believed that his "objective presentation of Russian history" would serve to counter the "Russophobia" that, according to him, had been fomented in Austria-Hungary largely by "Jewish journalism."⁷

It was while serving as ambassador to Russia that the personality clash between the studiously cautious Gołuchowski and the more dynamic Aehrenthal, together with their political differences, led to strained relations between them. Ever since Aehrenthal had been appointed minister to Romania, he had become the center of opposition in the foreign ministry to Gołuchowski's policy and the spokesman for those who wanted to see the foreign minister act more like a chancellor.⁸ The conflict over which foreign policy objectives should be pursued, essentially a conflict between activism and passivity, intensified after Aehrenthal moved to St. Petersburg, and is summed up in a series of exchanges between Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski.⁹ Their relations were not helped by the fact that Aehrenthal enjoyed great prestige in German–Austrian political circles and could count on the support of some Slav politicians such as the Young Czech leader Karel Kramář.¹⁰

your telegram of yesterday, I learn to my satisfaction that the articles in the *Neue Freie Presse* and *Fremdenblatt* had the desired effect ... in St. Petersburg." See also *ibid.*, 28 June 1900. Until he became head of the Literary Bureau in 1902, a position he held until 1910, Jettel carried on a running battle with his anti-Russian Hungarian predecessor, Ludwig (1901 Baron) von Dóczy, who exercised considerable influence on Gołuchowski's views. *Ibid.*, 5 January 1900. Heinrich Friedjung also could be relied on for newspaper articles supporting Aehrenthal's objectives.

7 HHStA, NA/5, Uebersberger to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 3 April 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 269). Uebersberger expressed his gratitude to Aehrenthal in *ibid.* and in the preface to his book *Österreich und Russland seit dem Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1: 1488–1605. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs, vol. 2 (Vienna, 1906). In his support for propagating knowledge of Russian history, Aehrenthal built on the work of his predecessor Prince Franz Liechtenstein, who was active, financially and in other ways, in furthering Russian studies in Austria; see Marija Wakounig, "Die Mission von Franz Liechtenstein in St. Petersburg 1894–1898: Ein Grandseigneur in der Diplomatie" (Unpublished *Habilitationschrift*, University of Vienna, 1996). See also Wakounig, "Der Fürst als Botschafter," in *Eliten und Aussenseiter in Österreich und Ungarn*, Waltraud Heindl et al., eds. Begegnungen an der Donau (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 2001), 117–137.

8 See 264–265 below.

9 See 181–219 below.

10 See chapter 6.

For years before he actually became foreign minister in 1906, Aehrenthal was touted as Gołuchowski's successor. As long as Gołuchowski remained in office, he had the feeling that Aehrenthal was looking over his shoulder, and that in corresponding with Aehrenthal he was communicating with his probable successor. Gołuchowski, it is claimed, felt uneasy every time Aehrenthal came to Vienna, fearing that his time was up.¹¹ According to Ernest von Koerber, who was Austrian prime minister at the time, in 1903 Gołuchowski tried to prevent Aehrenthal from attending the Mürzsteg meeting — arranged largely on Aehrenthal's initiative — between Emperor Francis Joseph and Tsar Nicholas II to discuss the plight of the rebellious Christians in the Turkish province of Macedonia. Koerber maintains that Gołuchowski hoped in this way to diminish Aehrenthal's importance and stature. Only by threatening resignation did Aehrenthal force the reluctant Gołuchowski to agree to his presence at the meeting.¹²

Added to Gołuchowski's discomfort over Aehrenthal's position as possible successor in the foreign minister's post was his irritation over the independent tone of Aehrenthal's diplomatic correspondence. For example, on one occasion, Aehrenthal wrote to Gołuchowski that he shrank from reading a dispatch to the Russian foreign minister because he (Aehrenthal) feared the impression it might have made.¹³ The foreign minister's pique shows through in the stinging and skeptical tone of his replies to several of Aehrenthal's memoranda and private diplomatic letters.¹⁴ The bristling relationship between the two men carried over into administrative matters. Shortly after he was informed of his appointment to the St. Petersburg post, Aehrenthal charged Gołuchowski with a "wounding lack of consideration" in appointing someone to the embassy there over his (Aehrenthal's) objections.¹⁵ Gołuchowski replied that while he

11 HHStA, NA/2, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 18 September 1899 (Wank, 1: No. 130). See also Heinrich Friedjung, *Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus 1884–1914*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1919–1922), 1: 456, and *Die Zeit* (Vienna), Morgenblatt, 24 October 1906.

12 Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 180, 19 November 1912. See 200–201 below for the Mürzsteg meeting. Several years earlier, Emil Jettel von Ettenach told Heinrich Friedjung about the incident and Aehrenthal's threat to resign. See Friedjung's notes on his conversation with Jettel sometime between the end of 1906 and the beginning of 1907 published in Friedjung, 2: 55–56. It was also rumored that Gołuchowski recommended Aehrenthal for the Austrian prime minister's post in 1899 in order to remove his rival. See HHStA, NA/2, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 18 September 1899, and enclosed telegram of 7 September 1899, and *ibid.*, Kramář to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 2 February 1900 (Wank, 1: Nos. 130, 150). See also chapter 6 below.

13 HHStA, PA X (Russland)/121, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 16 September 1903.

14 See, for example, 185–187, 217–218 below.

15 HHStA, NA/1, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 29 November 1898.

was greatly inclined to respect the wishes of individual mission chiefs, there were limits. He could not yield a right “which belongs unconditionally to me, and must belong to the head of the foreign service in order to enable him to reconcile at times violently conflicting demands.”¹⁶

For his part, Aehrenthal complained that his ability to function as a diplomatic representative was hampered by the fact that he was not kept sufficiently informed. When he was in Bucharest, he wrote to Mérey, “I receive only reports from Madrid, Tokyo, Lisbon, and some reports from consuls. Not a single word about what is happening in Constantinople [and] what is being discussed between the cabinets [i.e., governments].”¹⁷ The same complaint about a lack of diplomatic information was raised by other Habsburg diplomats. Liechtenstein, in giving advice to his successor in St. Petersburg, urged Aehrenthal to request that “the full reports of our representatives in Serbia and Montenegro and our consuls in Macedonia be sent to you as quickly as possible.”¹⁸ Ladislaus Szögyény, Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Berlin, complained to Emperor Francis Joseph about Gołuchowski’s indolence, which left diplomatic representatives without instructions and information.¹⁹

If the strained personal relations between Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski fueled their political differences, their political differences in turn exacerbated their strained relations. As indicated earlier, both men were acutely aware of the monarchy’s domestic weaknesses, and on its deepest level, the conflict between them was over which policies could rescue the Habsburg Monarchy from disintegration.²⁰ Therefore the juxtaposition of Gołuchowski’s “pessimism” and “passivity” to Aehrenthal’s “activism” and “optimism” should not obscure the underlying mood of political despair that they shared. While Gołuchowski’s despair showed itself as an attitude of resignation leading to inertia, Aehrenthal’s showed itself as an attitude of “desperation” leading to “activism,” at least until 1909.²¹ He advocated radical, and, as we have seen, largely unrealistic departures from existing reality, which presupposed resort-

16 Ibid. Aehrenthal also might have felt affronted because after his appointment to Romania in November 1895, he had been allowed to choose the members of his diplomatic staff. See Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, 53.

17 HHStA, NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Bucharest, 23 January 1897 (Wank, 1: No. 122). Mérey intervened, and the flow of diplomatic reports improved somewhat. Ibid., 26 February 1897.

18 Ibid., NA/3, Liechtenstein to Aehrenthal, St. Petersburg, 28 December 1898 (Wank, 1: No. 122). Liechtenstein’s letter contains a very unflattering portrait of Gołuchowski: “The carelessness and garrulousness of Gołuchowski...[and] the mendacity (*Verlogenheit*) of our [foreign] ministry are fatal factors with which you must reckon as unalterable for the present.”

19 Ibid., 4, Szögyény to Aehrenthal, Berlin, 10 June 1901. See also ibid., Csoór [Szögyény’s estate in Hungary], 6 October 1901 (Wank, 1: Nos. 176, 184).

20 See 71–73 above.

21 For a larger discussion, see Wank, “Varieties of Political Despair.”

ing to monarchical absolutism, and, until 1909, the incorporation of Serbia into the Habsburg Empire.²² Relations with Russia became the battleground on which the two men fought.

In a broader context, the alternatives represented by Gołuchowski and Aehrenthal became the basis for the development of two competing groups within the Habsburg ruling elite before 1914, identified at the highest level with Emperor Francis Joseph and Archduke Francis Ferdinand respectively.²³ Keeping in mind that there was some overlap between the two groups, with members of the ruling elite gravitating first toward one and then toward the other, one could say that the Francis Ferdinand group won out in July 1914.²⁴ This is not to say that either Francis Ferdinand or Aehrenthal, both of whom had already died, would have opted for war. To the contrary, there is considerable evidence to conclude that both men, the archduke in particular, would have opposed the resort to war.²⁵ In addition to all of the foregoing reasons, the differences

22 Ibid. See also the memorandum of 9 August 1908 in ÖUA 1: No. 32.

23 See Adam Wandruszka, "Finis Austriae? Reformpläne und Untergangsahnungen in der Habsburgermonarchie," *Südostdeutsches Archiv* 11 (1968): 112-123, and Solomon Wank, "Pessimism in the Austrian Establishment at the Turn of the Century," in *The Mirror of History: Essays in Honor of Fritz Fellner*, Wank et al., eds. (Santa Barbara, Calif., 1988): 295-314.

24 See Wandruszka, "Finis Austriae?" 119; William Jannen, Jr., "The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914," in *Essays on World War I: Origins and Prisoners of War*, Samuel R. Williamson, Jr. and Peter Pastor, eds. (New York, 1983), 55-81; Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., "Vienna and July 1914: The Origins of the Great War Once More," in *ibid.*, 1-36; Lützow, *Im diplomatischen Dienst*, 218-219.

25 On Francis Ferdinand's opposition to war, at least for the foreseeable future, see Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., "Influence, Power, and the Policy Process: The Case of Franz Ferdinand, 1906-1914" *The Historical Journal* 17 (1974): 417-434. On Aehrenthal's growing apprehension, after 1908, that war could lead to the destruction of the monarchy see chapters 12-13 of volume two of this biography (in preparation). In the meantime, see Solomon Wank, "Political versus Military Thinking." With regard to support of war in July 1914 by members of Francis Ferdinand's circle such as chief of the general staff Baron Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf and war minister Alexander von Krobatin, Samuel Williamson writes (434 of the article cited in this note): "Alive, Franz Ferdinand had acted as a brake upon the pressures for military action; dead, he became a pretext for war. In his absence, Conrad, Krobatin, and even Francis Joseph could give full rein to their conservative realism." There was one lapse in the archduke's antiwar stance; Francis Ferdinand briefly supported a war policy against Serbia in December 1912 during the First Balkan War. See Franz-Joseph Kos, *Die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Interessen Österreich-Ungarns und Deutschlands in Südosteuropa 1912/1913: Die Adria-hafen-, die Saloniki- und die Kavallafrage. Zur Kunde Südosteuropas*, vol. 2/20 (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar, 1996). On the bellicosity of the Aehrenthal "retinue" in the Ballhausplatz in July 1914, i.e., Baron Alexander von Musulin, Count Johann Forgách, and Count Alexander von Hoyos, see the two articles by Fritz Fellner cited on 71, n. 85. See also John Leslie, "Österreich-Ungarn vor dem Kriegausbruch: Der Ballhausplatz in Wien im Juli 1914 aus der Sicht eines österreichisch-ungarischen Diplomaten," in *Deutschland und Europa in der Neuzeit: Festschrift für Karl Otmar Freiherr von Aretin zum 65. Geburts-*

between Aehrenthal and Górchowski sprang from different role perspectives. As an ambassador, Aehrenthal concentrated on relations with one country, while Górchowski, as foreign minister, had to contend with multiple and diffuse relations.

Rapprochement with Russia, 1894–1897

As ambassador, Aehrenthal ardently advocated reaching an agreement with Russia. His commitment to that policy and the consistency and intensity with which he pursued it grew out of his view, formed early in his relationship with Kálmoky, of the primacy of relations with Russia. Aehrenthal returned from St. Petersburg in 1894 convinced that the only real chance Austria-Hungary had for a lasting satisfaction of its security needs was an understanding with Russia. Such an understanding was necessary to restrain Russia in its support of Slavic national movements inside and outside the Habsburg Monarchy and to permit a more active Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy to prevent the situation in the region from developing in ways that ran counter to Vienna's interests. He set down his views in a long memorandum that reviewed Austro-Russian relations since 1872 and concluded with the recommendation that Austro-Hungarian foreign policy be reoriented toward Russia.²⁶

In the memorandum, Aehrenthal maintained that before anything could be done, Austria-Hungary and Russia had to overcome their mutual suspicion and antipathy. After 1887, according to Aehrenthal, the Austro-Russian rivalry entered a new phase. The resolute resistance of Austria-Hungary to Russian pretensions in Bulgaria, Russia's anger at Bulgaria's lack of gratitude, and a consequent weakening of pan-Slavism, as well as Russia's growing preoccupation in the Far East, disposed Russia to an understanding. In 1891, an Austro-Russian commercial treaty was signed, clearing away one important obstacle. In the winter of 1894, Serbia was in a state of turmoil. Russia feared that Austria-Hungary would intervene and thus gain control of that country. Therefore, the Russian foreign minister, in a letter of 8 May 1894, proposed that Austria-Hungary prevent international complications by declaring its intention not to intervene in the internal troubles of Serbia; Russia would do the same in regard to Bulgaria. Kálmoky accepted the Russian proposal in a letter of 8 June 1894.²⁷

tag, Ralph Melville et al., eds. *Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Abteilung Universalgeschichte*, vol. 134 (Stuttgart, 1988), 662–663.

26 HHStA, PA I (Allgemeines)/469, Secret Fascicle XXIII/B, *Mémoire des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal über die Beziehungen zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Russland 1872–1894*. The memoir is dated June 1895.

27 Ibid.

Austro-Russian rapprochement had been achieved on the basis of the principle of maintaining the status quo and nonintervention: both parties, Aehrenthal concluded, had decided “that their vital interests and the maintenance of peace, which are connected, are more important than the rivalries and childhood illnesses of the Balkan peoples.”²⁸ However, Aehrenthal was not happy about the essence of the agreement, which was predicated on “the greatest possible passivity in relation to internal events in Serbia and Bulgaria.” According to Aehrenthal, the basis of earlier agreements between Austria-Hungary and Russia was different:

In 1876 as well as 1881, the Balkan Peninsula was, to a certain degree, divided into two spheres; in the western half, the special interests of Austria-Hungary were protected, while in the eastern, the Russian standpoint would prevail and Russian aspirations were preeminent.²⁹

Presumably, the Russian sphere would not include Austria-Hungary’s ally, Romania.

While accepting the status quo for the present, Aehrenthal advocated preparing for the collapse of Turkish rule in the Balkan Peninsula by negotiating a treaty with Russia on the basis of the earlier principle of the division of the region into spheres of influence.³⁰ The attainment of such a treaty became Aehrenthal’s goal for the next fourteen years.

A second memorandum, written in 1894, contains another leitmotiv of Aehrenthal’s political thought — the “straits question” as an object of barter between Russia and Austria-Hungary. Aehrenthal maintained that a “friendly

²⁸ Ibid. The translation is my own. A slightly different version may be found in Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 201–202. See *ibid.*, 191–202, on the Austro-Russian rapprochement in general. Aehrenthal’s view is typical of the indifference of Great Power diplomats to the feelings, aspirations, and problems of the Balkan peoples struggling to form coherent modern societies in a political environment in which their development was distorted by decaying empires and Great Power rivalries.

²⁹ *Mémoire des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, June 1895 (same as n. 26 above). The dates refer to the Reichstadt Agreement and Three Emperors’ Alliance, respectively. The texts of both are printed in Alfred Francis Pribram, *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary 1879–1914*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1921; reissued New York, 1967), 1: 36–47 (Three Emperors’ Alliance); 2: 188–190 (Reichstadt Agreement). The two volumes were originally published in German as *Die politischen Geheimverträge Österreich-Ungarns 1879–1914 nach den Akten des Wiener Staatsarchivs* (Vienna, 1920). The division of the Balkans into western and eastern spheres of influence was implied in the two agreements, but nowhere was this division explicitly stated, and neither Austria-Hungary nor Russia was inclined to give the other a free hand in Bulgaria and Serbia, respectively. See Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 77–78, 81–83, 119–121.

³⁰ *Mémoire des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, June 1895 (same as n. 26 above).

understanding between Austria and Russia with regard to the Balkan question" might be more easily achieved if Russia were assured of Austro-Hungarian support for its policy of closing the Bosphorus to all foreign warships without imposing restrictions on Russian warships coming out of the Black Sea.³¹

Kálmoky, whose "eastern" orientation inclined him toward an agreement with Russia, was sympathetic to Aehrenthal's views. He believed that the "Dardanelles lay outside the Austrian sphere of influence [and that] Austria would not feel herself called upon to fight the battle alone."³² However, he did not think that the ground was sufficiently prepared for a far-reaching understanding with Russia of the kind recommended by Aehrenthal.³³ If Kálmoky intended to prepare the ground for such an understanding, he was prevented from doing so by his more-or-less forced resignation in May 1895. In any event, Kálmoky, in his retirement, deplored the fact that under his successor, "we are steering again a course of more-or-less intolerable relations with Russia," which departed from the policy of coexistence for which he had striven "despite all difficulties and countercurrents."³⁴ After the conclusion of the 1897 entente with Russia, Aehrenthal lamented to his father that its real architect, Kálmoky, "is completely forgotten."³⁵ Kálmoky's policy "aimed precisely at consolidating relations with Russia in the way now achieved."³⁶ At the time of his resignation, Kálmoky "was especially pained by the thought that he would not take part in the coronation of his policy."³⁷

31 HHStA, PA XII/275, Fascicle XXVI, *Notiz des Legationsrathes Freiherrn von Aehrenthal über die Meerengenfrage 1894*. The day and month are not given.

32 Kálmoky made the statement to Count (1900 Prince) Philipp Eulenburg during a discussion in Vienna in December 1893. Eulenburg was Prussian minister in Munich at the time. GP IX, No. 2138, Eulenburg to German Chancellor and Prussian minister of foreign affairs Count Leo von Caprivi, Munich, 20 December 1893. Prince Heinrich VII Reuss, the German ambassador at Vienna, reported that Kálmoky told him that the straits "lay outside the Austrian sphere of influence." Prince Reuss was struck by Kálmoky's reference to the idea of "spheres of influence (*Interessensphären*)," which he had avoided for a long time. Ibid., No. 2141, Prince Heinrich VII Reuss to Chancellor Caprivi, Vienna, 22 December 1893. Kálmoky's statements were occasioned by the visit of some Russian warships to the French port of Toulon in October 1893. This gave rise to rumors that Russia intended to establish a permanent naval station in the Mediterranean and to fears of the unraveling of the straits question. Kálmoky became concerned by signs of a weakening of England's traditional policy of opposition to Russian control of the Straits. See the two documents cited in this note.

33 See the reports by Eulenburg and Prince Reuss cited in n. 32 above. See also Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 202, 204, 209–210.

34 HHStA, NA/2, Kálmoky to Aehrenthal, Schloss Prödlitz, 1 June 1896 (Wank, 1: No. 86).

35 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 26 November 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 669–671; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 313).

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid. On the 1897 entente, see 176–179 below.

Events in the Balkans and Near East soon confronted Kálnoky's successor with the necessity of reappraising the orientation of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy. The reexamination, which took place before Aehrenthal left for Bucharest, centered on the question of the renewal of the 1887 Mediterranean Agreement, between Great Britain, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, which pledged those three powers to consult one another to oppose any French or Russian attempts to upset the status quo in the Near East. The agreements had been designed to cope with Russian threats in Bulgaria, and envisaged the cooperation of the British fleet against a Russian attack on Constantinople and the Dardanelles.³⁸ The outbreak of the Armenian crisis sparked by the brutal persecution of Christian Armenians in Turkey in August 1895 and the rebellion, supported by Greece, of ethnic Greeks on the island of Crete against Turkish rule in February 1896 caused Gołuchowski to fear that the entire Eastern question would be unraveled. He became obsessed by the specter of Russia gaining control of Constantinople and the straits. The 1887 Mediterranean Agreement was designed to prevent that eventuality, but Gołuchowski believed, correctly, that it lacked a firm commitment that would bind England to defend Constantinople by force if necessary. In the fall of 1895, therefore, he opened negotiations with the British foreign secretary, Lord Salisbury, to secure such a commitment.³⁹

Shortly before he began negotiations with England, Gołuchowski asked four senior Austrian diplomats and a foreign office official, Aehrenthal among them, for their assessments of the situation. The others were Baron Heinrich Calice, ambassador at Constantinople; Count Franz Deym, ambassador at London; Ladislaus von Szögegy, ambassador at Berlin; and Baron Julius Zwiédinek, the influential Ballhausplatz adviser on Near Eastern affairs. Although younger than his diplomatic colleagues and only recently appointed to the rank of minister, Aehrenthal was included because of his great reputation as an expert on Russian policy. Still, one would think that Prince Franz Liechtenstein, as ambassador to Russia, would have been a natural adviser in the situation. He was, however, as a non-career diplomat something of an outsider,

38 The texts of the agreements are printed in Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 94–103, 116–133. See also *ibid.*, 2: 82–83, and Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, 398–407. On the Bulgarian issue see 131 and 140 above.

39 Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 213–218. More specifically, see Eurof Walters, "Lord Salisbury's Refusal to Revise and Renew the Mediterranean Agreements," *Slavonic and East European Review* 29 (1950): 267–286, and J. A. S. Grenville, "Gołuchowski, Salisbury, and the Mediterranean Agreements 1895–1897," *Slavonic and East European Review* 36 (1958): 340–369. Still useful with regard to the policies of the Great Powers in the Near East in 1895–1897 is William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890–1902*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1960), chapters 7, 10–11.

and therefore probably not considered a respectable source.⁴⁰ Furthermore, he had been appointed only recently to the St. Petersburg post. Those reasons would not have applied to Count Anton Wolkenstein, at the time ambassador to France and Liechtenstein's predecessor at St. Petersburg (1882–1894). Why he was not asked to participate in the policy review is not clear.

With the exception of Aehrenthal, they all recommended that the proper course for Austria-Hungary was to orient its Near Eastern policy to England. Zwiedinek and Deym regarded as desirable a modification of the Mediterranean Agreement to make the English commitment to the defense of Constantinople more specific, but recommended renewal even without it. Calice, on the other hand, advised against renewal without a firm English commitment to fight. Szögyény also counseled against a simple renewal of the agreement, but contented himself mainly with conveying the advice of the German chancellor and foreign minister that a renewal would be of great value to the Triple Alliance and that the prospects of renewal should not be jeopardized by an attempt to revise them.⁴¹

Aehrenthal's policy recommendations differed markedly from those of his colleagues, and exposed the sharp differences between him and his chief. The memorandum that Aehrenthal wrote recommended abandoning the agreement with England and opening up direct negotiations with Russia. Contrary to his colleagues, Aehrenthal argued that the only chance Austria-Hungary had to guarantee its security lay in a future understanding with Russia securing the monarchy's predominance in the western half of the Balkan Peninsula at the time of the anticipated collapse of Turkish authority in the region. An agreement on the basis of the preservation of the status quo for the present could lead to closer Austro-Russian relations, which would pave the way for the more far-reaching understanding that Aehrenthal envisaged. For this he was willing to pay the price of Russian control over Constantinople and the straits.⁴²

England, Aehrenthal argued, would never enter into a binding agreement to defend Constantinople and the straits because its vital interests had

40 See Wakounig, "Der Fürst als Botschafter" and Wakounig's unpublished *Habilitationsschrift*. Both are cited in n. 7 above.

41 On the debate within the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry on the revision of the monarchy's foreign policy see in general Peter Stein, *Die Neuorientierung der österreichisch-ungarischen Aussenpolitik 1895–1897: Ein Beitrag zur europäischen Bündnispolitik im ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert*. Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, vol. 44 (Göttingen, 1972), 80–108, and Grenville, "Gólurowski, Salisbury, and the Mediterranean Agreements," 346–349. Stein's account is more detailed and nuanced than Grenville's. See also Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 213–234.

42 HHStA, PA I/461, Secret Fascicle XXV, *Denkschrift des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, September 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 74).

shifted southward to the Suez Canal. Far from defending the straits, Aehrenthal maintained that England intended to use them as barter for an eventual agreement with Russia.⁴³ Austria-Hungary would be sure of England only if London committed itself to assisting the Triple Alliance powers in the event that they were faced with a two-front war:

England would have to spring to the aid of the Triple Alliance if a conflict were to break out between it [the Triple Alliance] and Russia and France. England would have the same rear protection in case it [England] should be simultaneously attacked by France and Russia.⁴⁴

⁴³ That idea ran counter to Aehrenthal's earlier view, shared by Szögyény, that the conflicts of interest between England and Russia precluded a far-reaching agreement between them. However, Anglo-Russian cooperation in the Armenian question, their earlier agreement on border delimitation in the Pamir region on the Indian frontier, as well as other signs of rapprochement, raised some doubts that Aehrenthal used to lend weight to his charge of England's unreliability. See HHStA, NA/4, Szögyény to Aehrenthal, Berlin, 8 December 1894 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 133). See also Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 214, 218. Whether Aehrenthal really believed in the possibility of an Anglo-Russian agreement at that time is doubtful. For more on Aehrenthal's attitude toward England, see 225–226 below. A pessimistic passage in a private letter of 23 November 1896 written by Salisbury to the British ambassador at Constantinople bears on Aehrenthal's argument: "As time goes on, the prospect that we shall ultimately keep the Straits out of the hands of Russia becomes fainter and fainter, but we must continue to hold to the old language — for as those hopes may become fainter our views or policy are unaltered.... The best we can hope for is to put off that result [Russia's control of the straits] till after the catastrophe of the Turkish Empire.... Of course, if the question of cutting up the sultan becomes practical the sovereignty of the Straits may become for both us and for Austria a question of compensation. Of course, we must say nothing of such views for the present as Austria would imagine we were going to desert her, which is certainly very far from being the case." Quoted in Stein, *Die Neuorientierung der österreichisch-ungarischen Aussenpolitik*, 170, n. 567. On the drift away from the traditional British policy of the defense of Constantinople and the straits see also Colin L. Smith, *The Embassy of Sir William White at Constantinople, 1886–1891* (London, 1957), 135–147. Aehrenthal was wrong, however, in believing that English public opinion supported the changed attitude. In fact, the traditional policy of the defense of Constantinople had been so well drilled into the public's mind that years after political and military leaders had reversed their opinion of the importance of the straits, their hold on the public mind was still strong enough to prevent any public affirmation to this effect. See A. W. Palmer, "The Anglo-Russian Entente," *History Today* (7 November 1957): 752.

⁴⁴ *Denkschrift des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, September 1895 (same as n. 42 above). Count Anton Wolkenstein, ambassador at Paris and previously at St. Petersburg (1882–1894), agreeing with Aehrenthal, argued that "no Continental power should enter into a lasting, intimate...political connection with England; the nature of England's interests, as can be readily seen, is such that the fear would be ever present that the Continental power would be the deceived one." HHStA, NA/4, Wolkenstein to Aehrenthal, Paris, 21 December 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 76).

Believing that England would not consent to this or any other binding agreement, Aehrenthal concluded that negotiations should not even be initiated because they might compromise Austria-Hungary in Russian eyes. Instead, the monarchy should retain its freedom of action and await the time when negotiations for a far-reaching agreement with Russia could be initiated. The monarchy had nothing to fear, since it was firmly allied with Germany and Italy and had a position "commanding respect" in Central Europe.⁴⁵

However, the time was not yet ripe for far-reaching negotiations. Aehrenthal correctly assumed that Russia, like Austria-Hungary, desired the maintenance of the status quo, since neither was prepared for its collapse. Moreover, Russia was in no hurry to conclude a Balkan agreement with the monarchy; it relied on the internal problems of the monarchy to restrain Austria-Hungary:

Russian policy fears any precipitate action and counts much more on the internal dissension in the monarchy with its symptoms of a process of decomposition and builds its hopes on that. Internal confusion would noticeably weaken the strength of the monarchy and allow Russia to realize its Near Eastern plans more easily. The further developments of our internal conditions will be of the greatest interest and significance for Russian policy. If, as confidently hoped, a rapid consolidation takes place, and all of our efforts in the first place should be directed toward this goal, then a gratifying change in the attitude and language of the St. Petersburg cabinet towards us will very soon be perceived.⁴⁶

In the meantime, Vienna and St. Petersburg could broaden and deepen the interest both had in maintaining the status quo in the Near East for the immediate future. The latter would be beneficial for Austria-Hungary, since the monarchy was not strong enough to carry out the mission of "European policeman" alone. However, the slogan of "free development of the Balkan peoples" could not be a final solution in the event Turkish authority was threatened in the Balkan Peninsula. The difficulties that would arise when Turkish authority in the Balkans collapsed would be simplified by an Austro-Russian agreement that would allow the two empires to take the lead among the pow-

45 *Denkschrift des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, September 1895 (Same as n. 42 above).

46 Ibid. Kálnoky agreed with Aehrenthal that there was no need to fear Russian offensive intentions or a hostile action against Austria-Hungary, as Gołuchowski did. For Russia to achieve its aims it was sufficient simply to wait for the further internal political development of the Danubian Monarchy: "If we ourselves look forward anxiously to the time when a change of rulers will take place in accordance with nature — our opponents count even more on this factor and incorporate it into their plans for the future." HHStA, NA/2, Kálnoky to Aehrenthal, Schloss Prödlitz, 27 October 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 75).

ers “and achieve a grouping and balance of forces holding out some promise of permanence.”⁴⁷

The agreement with Russia that Aehrenthal outlined differed somewhat from the ideas set down in his two earlier memoranda.⁴⁸ Rather than an outright partition of the Balkan Peninsula into Austro-Hungarian and Russian spheres of influence, he proposed creating a neutral area. In a negative sense, Austria-Hungary had to prevent Russia from acquiring a stranglehold on the Balkans and, in a positive sense, had to establish itself securely there. The negative aim would be accomplished by the neutralization of Romania and Bulgaria, the latter enlarged by the acquisition of Macedonia. The two Balkan states would reduce the size of their armies, and as a concession to Russia, they would not be permitted to possess warships in the Black Sea. The conversion of Romania and Bulgaria into buffer states would narrow the area of Austro-Russian friction and create conditions under which a friendly coexistence would be possible, essentially by neutralizing Russian predominance in the two states. Positively, Austria-Hungary would consolidate its position in the western half of the Balkan Peninsula by the incorporation of Serbia and the assured possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁹

Aehrenthal's plan was far more advantageous to Austria-Hungary than to Russia. He thought, however, that Vienna could obtain St. Petersburg's agreement by yielding control of the straits and Constantinople. Having already pointed out that Russia was in no hurry to conclude a far-reaching agreement with the monarchy, Aehrenthal recommended proceeding in stages: If Russia was not ready to go the whole way, then perhaps as a first step the neutralization of Romania and Bulgaria could be realized. In fact, Austria-Hungary also was in no hurry: “In view of the complex dualistic relations” it would probably be better to put off the annexation of Serbia.⁵⁰

Gołuchowski rejected Aehrenthal's program for a future Balkan order, and urged, rather, the need to obtain a binding British commitment to fight in defense of Constantinople and the straits. Underlying the debate over the renewal and revision of the Mediterranean Agreement with England was the question whether Austro-Hungarian and Russian interests were so incompatible that there was no basis for an understanding with Russia that would guarantee the security of Austro-Hungarian interests in the Near East. Zwiedinek, Deym, Calice, and other supporters of orienting Austro-Hungarian policy toward England regarded Russian ambitions in the Near East and Balkans as

47 *Denkschrift des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, September 1895 (same as n. 42 above).

48 See 164–166 above.

49 *Denkschrift des Freiherrn von Aehrenthal*, September 1895 (same as n. 42 above).

50 *Ibid.*

incompatible with the vital interests of Austria-Hungary in the region, a view shared by Gółuchowski.⁵¹ "As long as I am in office," Gółuchowski told the German ambassador at Vienna, "I shall not allow Russia to go to Constantinople."⁵² Once Russia was established there and in control of the straits as well, the Balkan states would, Gółuchowski believed, "crystallize around the new center of Russian influence, and Austrian influence in the Adriatic would be ended."⁵³ Furthermore, Austria-Hungary was not interested in receiving compensation in case of Turkey's collapse, "since every territorial addition to the present composition of the Austro-Hungarian state would be a major calamity for Austria."⁵⁴ From this perspective, a firm agreement with England would serve as a counterbalance to hostile Russian designs in the Near East. At the same time, it would tie England closer to the Triple Alliance, thereby precluding an Anglo-Russian understanding about which Gółuchowski was much perturbed at the time.⁵⁵

Aehrenthal's views were nevertheless endorsed by Liechtenstein and Wolkenstein and other conservative Russophile diplomats with ties to the high aristocracy.⁵⁶ Szögyény also belonged to this group, although he was cautious in expressing his views to Gółuchowski.⁵⁷ Unbeknown to Aehrenthal, Calice, when it became apparent that the negotiations with England would be fruitless, also embraced the partition idea as a way of establishing peaceful coexistence with Russia even at the price of Russian control of Constantinople and the straits. Austria-Hungary alone, Calice argued, was not strong enough to prevent the inevitable Russian acquisition of Constantinople. There seemed to be little point, in his view, to opposing what could not be prevented. It seemed wiser to draw some advantage from agreeing in principle to future Russian acquisition of Constantinople and the straits. As compensation, Russia would agree to cease its support of pan-Slavic and nationalist movements

51 Stein, *Die Neuorientierung der österreichisch-ungarischen Aussenpolitik*, 88–90, 154–156, and Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 215–216.

52 GP X, No. 2497, Count Philipp Eulenburg to Chancellor Prince Chlodwig Hohenlohe, Vienna, 8 November 1895. Gółuchowski also stated, "On this point H[is] M[ajesty], the emperor, is in full agreement with me." Ibid. Eulenburg had replaced in 1894 Prince Heinrich VII Reuss as German ambassador to Vienna.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Wolkenstein thought that it was urgently necessary to "convert into a practical principle" a policy of direct understanding with Russia. HHStA, NA/4, Wolkenstein to Aehrenthal, Paris, 21 December 1895 (Wank, 1: No. 76).

57 Stein, *Die Neuorientierung der österreichisch-ungarischen Aussenpolitik*, 50, 104. See also Szögyény's rather tortured critique of Gółuchowski's instructions to Aehrenthal at the time of the latter's appointment as ambassador to Russia (187–188 below).

in the Balkan Peninsula and give Austria-Hungary a free hand to use military force against neighboring Balkan states that supported transgressions of any kind against the political or territorial integrity of the Dual Monarchy.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, the British were reluctant to make the desired commitment. In February 1896, Kajetan von Mérey wrote to Aehrenthal,

We have been rebuffed in our attempt to persuade Salisbury to conclude a stricter and more binding *accord à trois*. They sang the same old song in London: England cannot enter into any formal agreement which requires it to go to war in a given situation, etc. They would be prepared to renew the accord from the year 1887 because — as Salisbury said *assez crûment* [crudely enough] to Deym — the latter really proclaims certain maxims without firmly binding England!⁵⁹

Despite the failure of the negotiations with England, Gołuchowski appeared to be in no hurry to open negotiations with Russia. He took comfort in the belief that as long as England remained in Egypt, it would have an interest in opposing Russian control of the straits and Constantinople.⁶⁰

Aehrenthal complained bitterly about what he regarded as Gołuchowski's blindness. To his friend Baron Karl von Macchio, Aehrenthal wrote that "we

58 Calice's views are contained in a memorandum to Gołuchowski of 30 April 1896. HHStA, PA I/474, Fascicle XXXII/a. Printed in Eurof Walters, "Austro-Russian Relations under Gołuchowski," 31: 218–229, esp. 225–228. For an extensive discussion of the document see Berthold Sutter, "Machtteilung als Bürgschaft des Friedens: Eine Denkschrift des Botschafters Heinrich von Calice 1896 zur Abgrenzung der Interessensphären zwischen Russland und Österreich-Ungarn am Balkan," *MÖSTA* 37 (1984): 290–324, especially 297–308. Aehrenthal did not learn about Calice's memorandum until after he became ambassador to Russia. *Ibid.*, 320–321.

59 HHStA, NA/3, Mérey to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 14 February 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 161). At the beginning of 1896, Salisbury wrote to Sir Edmund Monson, the British ambassador at Vienna, as follows: "I told Count Deym today that in this country it was impossible to take an engagement involving an obligation to go to war; as the power of H[er] M[ajesty's] Government to do so depended on the political sentiment prevailing at the moment when the necessity arose; and that sentiment it was impossible to foresee." Salisbury expressed his readiness to renew the original agreement because the vague statement of principle contained in it "in no way transgressed the limits to which I had already averted." BD VIII: 4–5, Salisbury to Monson, 4 February 1896. See also the documents attached to Walters, "Lord Salisbury's Refusal to Revise and Renew the Mediterranean Agreement," 271–286, esp. 279–283 (Deym to Gołuchowski, 6 February 1896).

60 See HHStA, NA/1, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 1 April 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 167). "Above all, it is important for us to maintain England's interest in the power relations in the Mediterranean Sea, and this would be lost if England should be forced to evacuate Egypt. The more England is nailed fast to the Nile, the better it is for us."

have lost ground significantly in the Balkans in the last year.”⁶¹ He criticized Góhuchowski for clinging to the idea of nonintervention, which in the long run would work in Russia’s favor. Harking back to his June 1895 memorandum on Austro-Russian relations, Aehrenthal argued that when it had been proclaimed as Austro-Hungarian policy in 1886, the policy of independence for the Balkan states had been sound: then, “there were in Bucharest, Belgrade, and Sofia men at the helm who resolutely and energetically pursued the same goal.”⁶² By 1896, however, the situation had totally changed: “With the exception of Romania, these states want the protection of Russia and therefore subordination to the wishes of the tsar.”⁶³ Aehrenthal criticized Góhuchowski for not taking the changed situation into account and for traveling “on a beaten path.”⁶⁴ He was particularly chagrined that “the minister does not want an understanding with Russia and declares firmly against delivering Constantinople to the latter power.”⁶⁵ Aehrenthal doubted whether Austria-Hungary had the means to keep Russia out of Constantinople. He scoffed at the idea, held by Góhuchowski, that Austria-Hungary could count on British support in the defense of Constantinople as long as England remained in Egypt.⁶⁶

In a report to Góhuchowski from the summer of 1896, Aehrenthal elaborated on the positions taken in his letter to Macchio. The policy of “the construction of small dams against Russian influence in Bulgaria and elsewhere” had been undercut by the developments of the last few years, which had given rise to “concern that Russian influence will establish itself permanently there.”⁶⁷ Yet against this, Austria-Hungary could only seek to strengthen Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria “in a limited way:” any growth in their strength might constitute a danger “for the internal condition of the monarchy, especially in Hungary, where Serbs and Romanians [who] show themselves unruly must grow with time.” Aehrenthal therefore concluded that the “vigorous affirmation of the independent development of the Balkan states as a program point of our Near Eastern policy may have seen its day.”⁶⁸

61 Ibid., NMa/1, Aehrenthal to Macchio, Bucharest, 14 May 1896 (Wank, 1: No. 84). Mérey agreed that “Russia is gaining along the entire line — Romania temporarily still excluded.” Mérey to Aehrenthal, 14 February 1896 (same as n. 59 above).

62 Aehrenthal to Macchio, Bucharest, 14 May 1896 (same as in n. 61 above).

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 HHStA, PA XVIII/29, Aehrenthal to Góhuchowski, R 46A confidential, Sinaia, 3 August 1896. Baron Heinrich Calice, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Constantinople, agreed with Aehrenthal that Austria-Hungary on its own could not prevent Russia from acquiring Constantinople. See Sutter, “Machtteilung als Bürgschaft des Friedens,” 301.

68 Aehrenthal to Góhuchowski, 3 August 1896 (same as in n. 67 above).

In part, the Balkan states hoped to increase their power through the acquisition of Turkish territories when that empire collapsed; each was casting about to determine from which side it might receive the greatest favor "in the division of the booty."⁶⁹ Unsympathetic to the unfolding national aspirations of the Balkan peoples, Aehrenthal wrote that fortunately,

the final decision, if the eventuality should set in, does not rest with the small barking dogs, who already are gnawing at the bones [of Turkey's Balkan possessions], but with the Great Powers, above all Austria-Hungary, who through the force of events have up until now constantly been compelled to reconcile their conflicting [Near] Eastern interests through compromise.⁷⁰

The message was clear. Developments dangerous to the internal and external position of the Dual Monarchy were taking shape in the Balkan Peninsula. The rivalry between Austria-Hungary and Russia allowed the small Balkan states to pursue policies harmful to the existence of the Dual Monarchy. The threat that these developments posed was still some years off. An Austro-Russian agreement was the surest way to prevent the threat from ever arising, but Austria-Hungary had to act quickly. For Russia, given its improving position and the ethnic and religious advantages it enjoyed in its relations with the Balkan peoples, might soon lose all interest in an agreement with Vienna.⁷¹

Aehrenthal's admonitions went unheeded, as did those of Calice, who warned that it was necessary "to come to an understanding with Russia as soon as possible, before Russia has, to some extent, settled in to the advantages of its new situation."⁷² Gołuchowski clung to his cherished diplomatic goal of the inclusion of England in the Triple Alliance.⁷³ But the diplomatic

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Calice to Gołuchowski, personal and very confidential, 29 February 1896. The letter is printed in Walters, "Austro-Russian Relations under Gołuchowski," 31: 218-219.

⁷³ Eurof Walters blames Salisbury for the failure to renew the Mediterranean Agreement, which led to an Austro-Russian agreement. As a further consequence, England became excluded from Balkan politics. Walters, "Lord Salisbury's Refusal to Revise and Renew the Mediterranean Agreements," 268-271. Grenville criticizes Gołuchowski for stressing a written agreement after Salisbury promised that as a matter of personal policy, he would defend the straits against a Russian attempt at conquest. Gołuchowski, according to Grenville, failed to see that an entente based on common interest was more viable than a binding treaty. Grenville, "Gołuchowski, Salisbury, and the Mediterranean Agreements," 366-368. Bridge agrees with Grenville. *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 217-218. It is not clear why Gołuchowski should have placed his faith in Salisbury's "personal policy," which could be changed after he left office and which depended on the mood of a parliamentary majority at any given time. The argu-

facts of Austria-Hungary's position worked against that objective as they earlier had worked against the "western" orientations of Andrassy and Haymerle. Discussions with Russia were begun during the visit of Tsar Nicholas II to Vienna at the end of August 1896, but were carried on afterward in a dilatory fashion.⁷⁴ A measure of calm was achieved in the Cretan question by mediation proposals advanced by the ambassadors of the Great Powers in Constantinople at the beginning of September 1896.

These compromise proposals proved unproductive, and the Cretan rebellion flared up again in January 1897. In February, the rebels proclaimed union with Greece, and on 17 April war broke out between Greece and Turkey. Fearing a larger crisis that might engulf the entire Balkan Peninsula and unable to count on England or Germany for support against a Russian move against Constantinople and the straits, Gólurowski pursued the negotiations with Russia more resolutely and concluded them during the visit of Emperor Francis Joseph to St. Petersburg on 27-29 April 1897.⁷⁵

Aehrenthal had been right; Russia, having become deeply involved in the Far East and lacking French support for its aims in regard to Constantinople and the straits, was ready to expand the 1894 declaration of nonintervention in the affairs of the Balkan states.⁷⁶ In April 1897, aware that they could not count on their allies for military support in the Balkans and Turkey, both Vienna and St. Petersburg decided to reach an agreement checking each other.⁷⁷

ment based on common interest is stronger, but there was no assurance that it would remain unchanged on England's part. See n. 43 above.

74 HHStA, NA/1, Gólurowski to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 1 September 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 187). The visit took place between 27 and 29 August.

75 Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 223-225. The Austro-Russian agreement is printed in Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 184-191.

76 Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 225-229 and Stein, *Die Neuorientierung der österreichisch-ungarischen Aussenpolitik*, 135, 172.

77 On the negotiations leading up to the 1897 entente see Stein, *Die Neuorientierung der österreichisch-ungarischen Aussenpolitik*, 183-189. See also Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 224-231; and Wilhelm M. Carlgrén, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal vor der bosnischen Annexionskrise: Russische und österreichisch-ungarische Balkanpolitik 1906-1908* (Uppsala, 1955), 7-17. In regard to Germany's reluctance to support its ally in the Near East, Baron Adolf Marschall, the German foreign secretary, told Szögyény at the beginning of November 1895, "We have...no direct interest in the Near East; we care little whether the Russians or the Turks have Constantinople.... [I]n that sense the [Bismarck] words about the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier still hold good today." GP X, No. 2494, *Aufzeichnung des Staatssekretärs Marschall*, Berlin, 4 November 1895. In December 1895, Prince Chlodwig Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst, the German chancellor, recommended to Gólurowski that Austria-Hungary "leave" Constantinople to Russia in exchange for the latter's agreement to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia as far as Salonica, and, if the foregoing acquisitions

Aehrenthal welcomed the agreement. Several days after it was reached, he wrote to his father that

Goluchowski, by initiating this entente, has achieved an incontestable success. The basis has now been laid for a peaceful coexistence of the two imperial powers. Now it is a matter of cultivating this relationship and protecting it from new disturbances.⁷⁸

It was precisely the cultivation of the new relationship that was to become one of the chief conflicts between Aehrenthal and Goluchowski in the years to come. The basic ideas of recognition of the independent development of the Balkan states, maintenance of the status quo, mutual renunciation of territorial acquisition, and mutual discussion of problems that arose in the Balkans were acceptable to Aehrenthal as short-term principles, but he regarded their implications as purely negative. He wanted to move toward a positive agreement along lines set down in his September 1895 memorandum.⁷⁹ In the discussions in the Ballhausplatz that preceded the negotiations in St. Petersburg, the chief of the general staff, General Friedrich von Beck, had urged Goluchowski to adopt the idea of partitioning the Balkans into spheres of influence. From the beginning, however, Goluchowski had excluded the question of the possession of Constantinople and the straits, the obvious price for obtaining such an agreement, from the negotiations.⁸⁰ Three years later, Aeh-

were "impractical" without it, Serbia. Goluchowski emphatically rejected such a solution to the Eastern question. Goluchowski's summary of his discussion with Hohenlohe is printed in Walters, "Austro-Russian Relations under Goluchowski," 31: 212–218. Marschall's statement was not true. By 1895, Germany had developed considerable political and commercial interests in the Balkans and Turkey. Some time later, Szögyény told Goluchowski, the German government took the position that it did in 1895 for tactical reasons vis-à-vis parliament "and at a moment when a conflagration appeared imminent, to discourage us from taking an action so strong it could have involved Germany." HHStA, PA XXXII/474, Szögyény to Goluchowski, Berlin, 29 March 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 510). See further Helmut Krausnick, "Holstein, Österreich-Ungarn und die Meerengenfrage im Herbst 1895: Persönliches Regiment oder Regierungspolitik?" in *Forschungen zu Staat und Verfassung: Festgabe für Fritz Hartung*, Krausnick, ed. (Berlin, 1958), 486–520. See also Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 216–217.

78 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father. Bucharest, 12 May 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 649; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 243).

79 See 168–171 above.

80 The minutes of the meeting held in the Ballhausplatz on 19 April 1897 in which the negotiating points were discussed are printed in Walters, "Austro-Russian Relations under Goluchowski," 31: 516–519. On Beck's memorandum see Berthold Sutter, "Um Österreich-Ungarns Grossmachtstellung am Balkan: Sicherung des europäischen Friedens durch Teilung der Balkanhalbinsel zwischen Russland und Österreich-Ungarn. Eine militärische

renthal lamented that exclusion to Calice, and wondered whether the Ballhausplatz would ever again have "a similar chance" as in 1897.⁸¹

One point related to the Austro-Russian agreement of 1897 must be mentioned because it helps explain Aehrenthal's near fixation on Bosnia and Herzegovina in the ensuing years. In a dispatch of 8 May 1897, Gółuchowski outlined the broad principles of the agreement for the Russian foreign minister. He specifically maintained that Austria-Hungary's right to substitute annexation for the existing occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to maintain garrisons in the Sanjak of Novibazar, as stipulated in the Treaty of Berlin, was beyond negotiation.⁸² In his reply of 17 May, Count Muraviev, the Russian foreign minister, while agreeing with Gółuchowski's interpretation of the broader principles of the agreement, stated that he could not accept Gółuchowski's position on the occupied provinces. The Russian foreign minister declared that the matter of annexation, which constituted a change in the Treaty of Berlin, would have to be given special consideration at a suitable moment. Muraviev's reservation, in effect, withdrew the *carte blanche* Russia had previously given to Austria-Hungary in the Three Emperors' Alliance of 1881 to carry out the annexation at a time chosen by her.⁸³

Muraviev also rejected Gółuchowski's assertion that Russia had agreed to the creation of an independent Albania at the time of the collapse of Turkish hegemony in southeastern Europe.⁸⁴ Since the end of 1896, the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry was intensely concerned with the future of Albania. At a confidential discussion in the Ballhausplatz on "the initiation of an energetic action in Albania" in November 1896, Gółuchowski stated that "Austria-Hungary [has] a vital interest that this region not come under the influence of another power."⁸⁵ This assertive tone in Gółuchowski's otherwise largely defensive foreign policy was formulated chiefly with Italy in mind. The success of the latter's ambitions in Albania would undermine Austria-Hungary's position in the western Balkans and as a sea power. To counter Italian ambitions, Austria-Hungary would, at the time of the liquidation of European Turkey, bring about the creation of an independent Albania that would become an Austro-Hungarian pro-

Denkschrift anlässlich der Kaiserentrevue 1897," in *Domus Austriae: Eine Festgabe für Hermann Wiesflecker zum 70. Geburtstag*, Walter Höflechner et al., eds. (Graz, 1983), 391–406.

See also Bridge and Carlgren as cited in n. 77 above.

81 Aehrenthal to Calice, St. Petersburg, 28 April 1900. Quoted in Sutter, "Machtteilung als Bürgschaft des Friedens," 320–321.

82 Gółuchowski's note is published in Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 191–195.

83 Muraviev's note is printed in *ibid.*, 190–195.

84 *Ibid.*, 189, 193.

85 Quoted in Stein, *Die Neuorientierung der österreichisch-ungarischen Aussenpolitik*, 183.

tectorate.⁸⁶ Muraviev rebuffed Góuchowski's attempt to secure Russia's consent to that objective in advance by stating that it touched on a question of the future, "which it would be premature and very difficult to decide at present."⁸⁷ Russia, as Aehrenthal said, was not going to bind itself in advance to a future annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and an "independent" Albania without compensation for itself in the questions of Constantinople and the straits.

Aehrenthal saw Muraviev's reservations as restricting Austria-Hungary's freedom of movement in Balkan affairs, even though Góuchowski consistently refused to recognize their existence. In Aehrenthal's view, "the [8 May] dispatch was a mistake."⁸⁸ Consequently, the work of securing the monarchy's title to the two occupied provinces would have to be done all over again. A considerable part of Aehrenthal's diplomacy as ambassador to Russia and foreign minister was devoted to confirming the monarchy's right to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. These efforts culminated in the famous Buchlau meeting between Aehrenthal and Alexander Izvolsky, the Russian foreign minister, in September 1908.⁸⁹

The Austro-Russian Entente, 1897–1903

In the months after the conclusion of the entente, Aehrenthal and other partisans of a positive approach to relations with Russia were frustrated by Góuchowski's unwillingness to cultivate the new relationship in the interest of meeting long-range Austro-Hungarian security requirements. In fact, the embassy in St. Petersburg became vacant in 1898, when Prince Liechtenstein resigned in a huff over Góuchowski's negative attitude toward Russia. The last straw was, as Liechtenstein informed Aehrenthal, Góuchowski's incomprehensible rejection of a proposal whereby Russia would guarantee the integrity of Turkey in return for Austria-Hungary's support of Russia's plan to have a Christian governor-general, Prince George of Greece, appointed as head of an autonomous administration on the Turkish island of Crete.⁹⁰

Aehrenthal regarded Góuchowski's policy of strict adherence to the agreement of 1897 not only as too self-effacing and detrimental to the monarchy's

⁸⁶ See the minutes of the meeting in the foreign ministry of 19 April 1897 (same as in n. 80 above) and Sutter, "Um Österreich-Ungarns Grossmachtstellung," 398–399.

⁸⁷ Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 193.

⁸⁸ Aehrenthal's comment appears in a marginal note on instructions from Góuchowski. HH-StA, Botschaftsarchiv St. Petersburg, 1897–1901, 1: 556, 29 December 1901.

⁸⁹ See chapter 11 in volume two of this biography (in preparation).

⁹⁰ HHStA, NA/2, Liechtenstein to Aehrenthal, St. Petersburg, 28 December 1898 (Wank, 1: No. 122). Prince George was appointed governor-general in November 1898.

prestige, but injurious to its domestic stability as well. He admitted to Mérey, that “in view of the ever more increasing opposition between Cis[leithania] and Trans[leithania], it is in fact difficult to construct a good foreign policy.”⁹¹ But harking back to ideas formed during his association with Kálnoky, Aehrenthal argued that it was precisely because the monarchy was wracked by nationality conflicts that threatened its existence that it had to pursue an active, that is to say an imperialist, foreign policy in the Balkan Peninsula, transcending those conflicts and providing a focal point for internal unity. On the one hand, an active policy would impress the contending nationalities with the vitality and strength of the monarchy, while on the other hand, such a policy would prevent the Balkan situation from developing in ways that were dangerous to the monarchy. To that end, Aehrenthal repeatedly urged Gołuchowski to go beyond the self-denying implications of the 1897 agreement. He wanted Austria-Hungary to use Russian preoccupation in the Far East and her desire for peace on her western flank to strengthen the monarchy’s influence in the Balkan Peninsula and to reach an agreement with Russia on a future order. Knowing full well that serious Austro-Hungarian overseas expansion was impossible, Aehrenthal nevertheless recommended to Gołuchowski that Austria-Hungary “mix in a little” in the Far East to make Russia more respectful of the monarchy and to increase the worth of Vienna’s friendship and its bargaining position.⁹²

In spite of its Far Eastern plans, Aehrenthal stressed that Russia could never completely disengage herself from the Balkans and, willingly or not,

91 Ibid., NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Bucharest, 26 February 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 162).

92 Ibid., PA X/112, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 10 June 1899. See also ibid., 119, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 34B, St. Petersburg, 13 June 1903. Aehrenthal was not the only Austro-Hungarian diplomat who was painfully aware that Austria-Hungary’s inability to enter into the imperialist competition diminished its status as a Great Power. Earlier, Szögyény had written to Gołuchowski, “Presently, all of the European powers, with the exception of our monarchy, have expanded their vital interests far beyond the frontiers of Europe. For the present, Austria-Hungary has the advantage of being able to observe the colonial strivings of the other powers. Our monarchy can therefore devote its entire strength to consolidation of its internal relations so that at some future time it could participate with prospects of success in the competition of the other powers for influence and the establishment of commercial interests in distant parts of the world. That this task will present itself to us sooner or later can scarcely be doubted if the monarchy wants to maintain its Great Power status.” Berlin, 29 March 1899 (same as in n. 104 below). Aehrenthal was not completely correct in believing that Gołuchowski was reluctant to “mix in a little” in China, North Africa, and Latin America, but his efforts came to naught because Austro-Hungarian capitalism was not sufficiently developed and dynamic and the monarchy’s political structure was not strong enough to support imperialist policies overseas or even closer to home in the Balkan Peninsula. See also Evelyn Kolm, *Die Ambitionen Österreich-Ungarns im Zeitalter des Hochimperialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2001), 82–97; and Fritz Klein, “Weltpolitische Ambitionen Österreich-Ungarns vor 1914,” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte* 29 (1983): 263–289.

would have to return to this traditional area of Russian foreign policy, where, by virtue of race and religion, she enjoyed an advantage over Austria-Hungary. Aehrenthal knew that Russia preferred to preserve the entire Balkan Peninsula as her sphere of influence.⁹³ Only under pressure would Russia yield anything. The Dual Monarchy had only to await the time when Russia, caught in the crossfire of her far-flung endeavors, would find an agreement with the monarchy concerning Balkan affairs to be necessary and desirable. When that moment arrived, Austria-Hungary, adopting an attitude of give and take, should press for a twofold agreement affirming the mutual desire of the two powers to uphold the status quo for as long a possible on the one hand and, on the other, defining the objectives to be pursued when the status quo collapsed. He constantly reminded Gółuchowski that the Balkans were essential to Austria-Hungary's internal and external development; if the Dual Monarchy lost its position in the Balkans, it would, in reality, have no position at all.⁹⁴

The issue between Aehrenthal and Gółuchowski was joined in a long memorandum (*Denkschrift*) written by Aehrenthal in December 1898, two months before he left to take up his ambassadorial post in St. Petersburg. The subject of his memorandum was Austro-Russian relations in the context of Austria-Hungary's domestic and foreign policies. The part on domestic policy, which will be discussed later, is relatively short, because Aehrenthal had sent Gółuchowski a long private letter on internal affairs in January 1898, which will be discussed later as well.⁹⁵ The December 1898 memorandum is an example of Aehrenthal's sense of intellectual superiority and independence, which no doubt struck Gółuchowski, and not without reason, as presumptuousness. Contrary to the usual procedure, rather than waiting to receive his chief's instructions, he set forth the fundamentals of policy to be pursued towards Russia, in effect instructing the foreign minister on the main lines of that policy.

Aehrenthal began the foreign policy section of his memorandum by declaring that

the Austro-Russian agreement has not developed beyond general propositions ... Our attempt to induce Russia to make binding declarations concerning the ultimate annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the creation of an autonomous Albania must be considered a failure.⁹⁶

93 HHStA, NMa/1, Aehrenthal to Macchio, St. Petersburg, 1 June 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 168).

94 Ibid., PA X/118, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, St. Petersburg, 26 February 1902; *ibid.*, 119, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, R. 4D, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 13 January 1903; *ibid.*, 121, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 10 September 1903.

95 On the domestic parts of the December 1898 memorandum and the January 1898 letter see chapter 6 below.

96 HHStA, PA I/474, Fascicle XXXII/f, *Denkschrift des neuernannten Botschafters in Petersburg*

If the case should arise, Russia could, but was not obligated to, adopt the desired solutions for both problems. The agreement was silent concerning the future of Constantinople and the straits. Moreover, it had not even achieved one of its chief objectives — removing mutual fear and suspicion. In fact, since the conclusion of the entente, Russia, instead of giving up her pretensions as protector of the Balkan lands, had increased her activity there by extending her sympathies not only to Slavs but to all Orthodox Christians.⁹⁷ Even so, Aehrenthal thought that those unhappy conditions should not deter the monarchy from “cautiously and persistently” attempting to reach an agreement with Russia.

Aehrenthal observed that Russia's Far Eastern involvement and internal discontent forced her to hew to a policy of status quo “which binds us and offers us no advantage.” Pure logic, Aehrenthal contended, recommended that Austria-Hungary undertake

a policy of action, of purposefully encouraging the Balkan troubles with the intention to exploit the moment in the best possible interest of the monarchy when Russia would...like to avoid external complications.

Such a course, Aehrenthal stated, was in practice impossible because of the Dual Monarchy's own internal troubles and the desire on the part of prominent political circles in the monarchy for friendly relations with Russia. For the foreseeable future — about fifteen to twenty years — Austria-Hungary together with Russia had to strengthen and secure Turkish rule in Europe. Aehrenthal deemed the prospects for a successful status quo policy to be excellent, since Russia, engaged elsewhere, had no designs on Constantinople, and Austro-Hungarian troops stationed in the Sanjak of Novibazar could prevent a Montenegrin-Bulgarian action against the sultan. Turkey, Aehrenthal thought, could handle an attack by a single Balkan state. This was Aehrenthal's minimum short-term program. Simultaneous with resolute action to preserve the status quo, Austria-Hungary and Russia had to reach an agreement on a broader, long-range solution to the Turkish question that would consolidate the Dual Monarchy's position in the western half of the Balkan Peninsula.

... 31 Dezember 1898: *Unser Verhältnis zu Russland betrachtet vom Gesichtspunkte der inneren und äusseren Politik der Monarchie*. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from the memorandum. The emphasis is in the original. The memorandum is printed in two places: Walters, “Austro-Russian Relations under Goluchowski,” 32: 196–203, and Rutkowski, 1: No. 464. The latter is a more reliable transcription and gives the correct archival source, which the former does not.

⁹⁷ Aehrenthal cited Russia's Cretan policy (see 179 above) and its rapprochement with Romania as symptomatic of this broader policy.

According to Aehrenthal, a failure of Austria-Hungary to maintain its supremacy in the western Balkans would be fatal to the future of the monarchy:

Pushed out of Germany and Italy, prevented from advancing to the mouth of the Danube and the Black Sea, because there it [Austria-Hungary] would come into conflict with Russia's most vital interests, there remains only one direction for Austria-Hungary to exercise her power position and her influence, i.e., hegemony in the Adriatic and the lands on its east coast.

That was the direction which Prince Eugene had pointed out in his advance to Sarajevo and which Count Andrassy had revived in the Treaty of Berlin, aimed at preventing an independent union of Serb lands and the establishment of a great Slav state in the Balkans. Aehrenthal predicted that

the development which the complex of the Serbian question, i.e., Bosnia and Herzegovina, [the] Kingdom of Serbia, and possibly the so-called Old Serbia undergoes may be decisive for the power position of the monarchy in the twentieth century ... Their future can lie only in their ultimate incorporation into the monarchy.⁹⁸

The surrender by the monarchy of its supremacy in the Serbian lands would be an "irrevocable mistake" that would emphasize even more strikingly than before the character of Austria-Hungary as a union of two loosely connected Central European states, which in the long run would not generate enough vitality to survive. Aehrenthal believed that "only through a policy inspired by historical traditions...will it be possible to strongly unite the peoples of the monarchy and lead them toward a glorious future." Thus he envisioned the eventual incorporation of the Serb-inhabited lands and the creation of an autonomous Albania directly under Austro-Hungarian influence, establishing thereby the monarchy's supremacy in the western half of the Balkan Peninsula. In view of the existing internal constitutional problems, Aehrenthal took it as self-evident that the incorporation of the Serb lands would come about gradually. The existing constitutional relations in Austria-Hungary, he wrote, "compel us to adopt a very cautious tempo."

The only way that Russian consent to his long-range solution of the Eastern question could be obtained, Aehrenthal maintained, was by an Austro-Hungarian pledge that the monarchy would not oppose Russia's eventual conquest

⁹⁸ Old Serbia, better known as Kosovo, is the region directly south of the Sanjak of Novibazar; at the time it was part of the Turkish Empire. During the Middle Ages it was part of the Kingdom of Serbia.

of Constantinople and the straits. The delicate question of who would replace the Turks as masters of the entrance to the Black Sea probably would not come up in the foreseeable future. This was all the more reason why Austro-Hungarian diplomacy should strive to maintain European Turkey, since the Dual Monarchy could offer no compensation apart from Constantinople and the Straits should the questions of Albania and Macedonia arise. In short, everything had to be saved until the time when Austria-Hungary, as compensation for allowing Russia to acquire control of Constantinople and the straits, would be able to realize all of its ambitions in the western Balkans. He suggested that the monarchy begin discussions with Russia on his proposed new Balkan order while avoiding, on the one hand, being drawn into premature serious negotiations and, on the other, removing all doubt on the Neva "that [our] position in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the natural development toward the south and east forms a *noli me tangere* which Austro-Hungarian policy is absolutely determined to maintain."

Austria-Hungary, according to Aehrenthal, had little to fear from Russian control of Constantinople and the straits, which he thought were of minimal strategic value to the Dual Monarchy. Rather, he predicted that their acquisition by Russia would be catastrophic for her political position:

The Russian colossus with one foot on the Neva and the shores of the Baltic, and the other caught in the Aegean, offers, it is clear, many vulnerable spots. The [Russian] empire will not be able to hold such an exposed position for a long time; rather, it will break in the middle.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Aehrenthal did not elaborate on why Russian acquisition of Constantinople should lead to the destruction of Russian power. He pointed out, however, that Count Andrassy was of the same opinion regarding Russian conquest of the straits, and that Andrassy had used almost the same words in a memorandum to the emperor in 1885: *A Russia that stands with one foot in St. Petersburg and the other at the Bosphorus must break first into two, later... into several parts on geographical and climatic, if not ethnographic grounds*. HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv, Geheimakten 19, Andrassy to Emperor Francis Joseph, 24 November 1885. The emphasis is in the original. The memorandum is printed in Wank, 2: Appendix 1, 765–776. Aehrenthal had received a copy of the memorandum from Heinrich Friedjung, who had gotten a copy from Andrassy's son. Ibid., NA/2, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 27 July 1898 (Wank, 1: No. 115). Aehrenthal's view was also shared by some influential Russians. In 1891, Nicholas Giers, then Russian foreign minister, told Alexandre Ribot, his French counterpart, that Russia had no interest in establishing herself in Constantinople and that as "long as the Turks maintain themselves there, we will have no ambitions on that score." Giers continued, "for the Russian Empire, installing herself on the Bosphorus would be a great adventure. What would become of St. Petersburg?" Giers concluded with the remark that it would be another story if the Greeks, Austrians, or any other nation wanted to replace the Turks in Constantinople. DDF 1/IX, No. 139, Ribot to Paul Cambon (French ambassador at Constantinople), 6 December 1891.

Aehrenthal concluded by advising Gółuchowski that "through the preservation of the existing strong alliance with Germany...and through a realistic approach to the Turkish question without the slightest consideration of sympathy or humanitarian impulses," Austria-Hungary would be in a position "to await calmly the further development of things in the Balkans, and in the East in general." Characteristic of the cynicism inherent in realpolitik, the plight of the small Balkan nations "scarcely removed from primitive conditions and impressed only by force and a resolute policy that is supported by so-and-so many thousands of bayonets" counted for little with Aehrenthal.

Gółuchowski, already familiar with Aehrenthal's ideas on account of his September 1895 memorandum, remained unimpressed by the ambassador's optimistic and confident reasoning. His reply was given in his instructions for the newly named ambassador.¹⁰⁰ In response to Aehrenthal's criticism of the lack of progress in Austro-Russian relations, Gółuchowski maintained that he had taken the initiative in concluding the 1897 agreement and that it was Count Muraviev, the Russian foreign minister, who was responsible for any failure to advance beyond that point. Muraviev, Gółuchowski told Aehrenthal, had not kept his promise to continue the negotiations. Gółuchowski also criticized Muraviev for taking no steps to halt Russian press attacks against the monarchy, the hostile activities of Russian representatives in Sofia and Belgrade, or the sizeable shipments of Russian arms to Montenegro. Gółuchowski believed that in the future it would be Muraviev's, and not his or Aehrenthal's, business to initiate further negotiations concerning the Balkans.

Aehrenthal's conception of a new Balkan order, as well as his vision of the Balkan Peninsula as a proving ground for Austria-Hungary's status as a European Great Power, came under Gółuchowski's withering criticism. He rejected Aehrenthal's recommendations that Austria-Hungary expand into the Balkan Peninsula. On the contrary, Austria-Hungary, the foreign minister remonstrated, had to do everything it could to discourage the still prevalent suspicion of a "march to Salonica." Even if it could be done, the long-term maintenance by the Dual Monarchy of an empire reaching to Salonica would be possible only if Serbia were to be seized.¹⁰¹ Gółuchowski professed disbe-

100 HHStA, PA I/474, Fascicle XXXII/f, Gółuchowski to Aehrenthal, 1: 132 very confidential, 2 March 1899. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from Gółuchowski's instructions. The document is printed in two places: Walters, "Austro-Russian Relations under Gółuchowski," 32: 206-213, and Rutkowski, 1: No. 487. The latter is more reliable and gives the correct archival source.

101 Aehrenthal did not mention the "march to Salonica" in his memorandum. But Gółuchowski assumed that that was what Aehrenthal meant by the statement, "[our] position in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the natural development toward the south and east forms a *noli me tangere* which Austro-Hungarian policy is absolutely determined to maintain." Indeed, the

lief that there was a statesman in Austria-Hungary “who could assume the responsibility for such an adventurous policy.” As it was then constituted, Austria-Hungary was already sorely tried by the sharp conflict between its numerous nationalities. Further territorial gains in the Balkans, if they did not tie Austria-Hungary’s hands altogether, would severely restrict its freedom of action in every direction. Apart from the task of crushing Serbia and Serbianism, territorial growth by the monarchy in the Balkans also would have involved a direct conflict with Bulgaria and Greece, which would have increased the number of the monarchy’s external opponents.

Gołuchowski made it clear to Aehrenthal that Bosnia and Herzegovina represented the limits of Austro-Hungarian expansion toward the southeast. The annexation of those lands, Gołuchowski wrote, was necessary for the security of the monarchy’s Dalmatian territories and because the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina between Serbia and Montenegro would constitute a threat to the monarchy’s southern frontier that “could not be permitted under any circumstances.” Gołuchowski concluded that it was best to hold fast to the principles of the 1897 agreement. According to his interpretation, rejected by the Russians,¹⁰² that agreement stipulated for Austria-Hungary the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the creation of an autonomous Albania, and for Russia the strict adherence to the provisions governing the straits and Constantinople contained in the 1856 Treaty of Paris and the London Convention of 1870.¹⁰³ For the Balkan peninsula, Gołuchowski envisioned a gradual decomposition of the Ottoman Empire, enabling the small states to expand and become buffers between Austria-Hungary and Russia.

The most drastic difference between Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski was in their conflicting views of the consequences of Russian possession of Constantinople. Gołuchowski took the position that even though the political significance of Constantinople might diminish in the course of time, Austria-Hungary “could under no circumstances...yield the Golden Horn to Russia.” He was convinced that

plan for economic imperialism that Aehrenthal developed as foreign minister was to envisage Salonica’s becoming an Austro-Hungarian-dominated economic emporium (see chapter 10 of volume two, in preparation). The partition proposals of both Calice (172 above) and General Beck (177–178) include Salonica in Austria-Hungary’s Balkan sphere of influence.

¹⁰² See 178–179 above.

¹⁰³ The Treaty of Paris reaffirmed the Straits Convention of 1841, which stipulated the closing of the straits to warships of all nations so long as the Turkish government was at peace. A revision in the treaty forbade Turkey and Russia from having warships in the Black Sea. Russia denounced this clause in the London Convention of 1870, and it was withdrawn in 1871 by the Treaty of London. That treaty admitted, for the first time, that if the Turkish government became involved in a war it could permit an allied fleet to enter the straits. See Albertini, *The Origins of the War*, 1:13.

The possession of the Hagia Sophia by an Orthodox power would exert such a strong attraction over the entire Balkan Peninsula and possibly even beyond, namely into our own territory, that against it we would have no effective means available to maintain our position of power there intact.

In Gołuchowski's opinion, however disastrous might be the long-term effects on Russia of its control of Constantinople, Russian control of that city would be even more disastrous for the monarchy:

It might be correct that the possession of Constantinople would be an Achilles' heel for Russia; it may be uncontestable that the latter through this acquisition would sow the seeds of its own destruction. It is no less certain that we would not survive the resulting process of decomposition, and that long before the Russian Empire would be seriously damaged we would use up our best forces resisting the tidal wave of Russian pan-Orthodoxy and finally succumb.

The exchange between the two men did not affect the outlook of either, although it illustrates that underneath their differences they were in agreement on all issues of immediate substance. The status quo in the Balkan Peninsula had to be maintained for the foreseeable future, and Bosnia and Herzegovina eventually would be incorporated into the monarchy. They both regarded the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as inevitable and agreed that in the eventual partition of European Turkey, Serbia would not be permitted to increase its size and strength or to unite with Montenegro, and an autonomous Albania would be created that would come under the influence of Austria-Hungary. In essence, the thinking of both men was defensive and fed by their mutual apprehensions about the monarchy's disintegration, although Aehrenthal's is masked by the ringing phrases in which he couched his ideas and by the outwardly optimistic tone of his memorandum. It was their awareness of the fragile foundations of the Habsburg Monarchy that led both to consider relations with Russia as a question of life or death.

Where they differed was in their defensive strategies. Gołuchowski thought it best to pursue a policy that did not anticipate events and to preserve the peace with Russia by maintaining the Ottoman Empire. In practice, Gołuchowski's thinking did not proceed beyond the status quo, with two fairly large exceptions: the annexation of Bosnia and the eventual creation of Albania as an Austro-Hungarian satellite state. Aehrenthal, on the other hand, saw the survival of the monarchy attached to a frankly expansionist policy and the maintenance of peace with Russia not by saving the Ottoman Empire, but by partitioning it.

Szögyény, to whom Gołuchowski sent a copy of the instructions, gave Aehrenthal veiled support by conveying the German government's position on the

future of Constantinople and the straits.¹⁰⁴ He stated that he had long held the view that “an understanding with Russia, while at the same time upholding our alliance with Germany, should constitute the aim of our [foreign] policy.” He took great pains to point out that Austria-Hungary must take account of Berlin’s apprehensions that “an all-too-complete understanding with Russia” would lessen the worth to Austria-Hungary of its alliance with Germany. But he reminded Gołuchowski that in the Near Eastern crisis of 1895, which led to the reconsideration of the Mediterranean Agreement, Emperor William II had declared that if the collapse of Turkey really became unavoidable, and if Russia at that time could not be prevented from conquering Constantinople, he would stand at his ally’s side with Germany’s full strength in order to support their eventual demand for compensation elsewhere.¹⁰⁵

It is hardly surprising that Gołuchowski never responded directly to Szögyény’s report.¹⁰⁶ He certainly approved Szögyény’s warm endorsement of the alliance with Germany, but was no doubt greatly dismayed at Szögyény’s indirect approval of Aehrenthal’s plan to yield Constantinople to Russia in exchange for the latter’s recognition of an Austro-Hungarian sphere of influence in the western Balkans.¹⁰⁷

Calice, to whom Aehrenthal sent a copy of his memorandum, admired the “courageous freshness and assurance” of Aehrenthal’s ideas, which resembled those contained in his (Calice’s) 1896 memorandum, but wondered whether Austria-Hungary “still possessed all of its trump cards.” The growing intimacy between Bulgaria and Russia suggested to him that Austria-Hungary no lon-

104 HHStA, PA I/474, Fascicle XXXII/f, Szögyény to Gołuchowski, R. 14A very confidential, Berlin, 29 March 1899. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from Szögyény’s report. The document is printed in two places: Walters, “Austro-Russian Relations under Gołuchowski,” 32: 487–498, and Rutkowski, 1: No. 510. In a letter to Aehrenthal, Szögyény explained that in his reply to Gołuchowski he declared himself “in general agreement” with the latter’s instructions to him (Aehrenthal) in order to criticize them in an unpolemical way by giving his interpretation of the instructions. HHStA, NA/4, Berlin, 21 May 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 536).

105 On the 1895 crisis and Germany’s position on Constantinople and the straits at the time, see Szögyény to Gołuchowski, T. 136 secret, Berlin, 14 November 1895. Printed in Krausnick, “Holstein, Österreich-Ungarn und die Meerengenfrage,” 519–520. See also n. 77 above.

106 Szögyény to Aehrenthal, 21 May 1899 (same as in n. 104 above).

107 In a private letter to Szögyény, Gołuchowski commented on the alliance relationship with Germany in words that paraphrased Szögyény’s emphasis on upholding the alliance contained in his report of the instructions to Aehrenthal. HHStA, NA/4, Szögyény to Aehrenthal, Berlin, 12 May 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 532). Szögyény informed Aehrenthal that Count Nicholas Szécsen, at that time first section chief in the Ballhausplatz and later ambassador to the Vatican and Paris, “would be ready to subscribe to every word of my exposition.” Ibid.

ger had a Bulgarian card to play.¹⁰⁸ In his reply, Aehrenthal, who had received a copy of Calice's memorandum, bemoaned Gołuchowski's unwillingness to pay the price of a "lasting understanding," thereby reducing the 1897 entente to "a wish for peace and maintenance of the status quo" and the promise of the two rulers not to act without prior consultation.¹⁰⁹ To Aehrenthal that was "a thin thread out of which hardly a usable rope could be made."¹¹⁰ In the absence of a "principled rapprochement," Austria-Hungary had an entente on paper, but it provided "no firm foundation on which calmly to construct policy." Russia, Aehrenthal thought, could wait, but the question was whether Austria-Hungary could wait and whether it had the means to oppose "the ever increasing influence and preponderance of Russia."¹¹¹

After 1899, Aehrenthal strove to improve "the existing cool, really frosty, relationship to Russia."¹¹² In his view, "Austria-Hungary possesses a greater interest in the maintenance and cultivation of friendly relations with Russia than vice versa." Good relations with Russia were necessary to prevent the conflict of interest with it in the Balkan Peninsula from erupting into a war. Austria-Hungary should not "run after" Russia, but adopt a policy of waiting "for a situation in which Russia approaches us with proposals."¹¹³ Gołuchowski, while agreeing in general with Aehrenthal on the value of good Austro-Russian relations, rejected the view that Austria-Hungary had a greater stake than Russia in Austro-Russian friendship. He maintained that insofar as Russia had an interest in preserving peace for the foreseeable future, which he assumed was the case, Austria-Hungary (as far as the Near East was concerned) was "just as important a factor for Russia as it is for us."¹¹⁴

As part of his efforts to cultivate warm relations with Russia, Aehrenthal worked to remove as many causes of suspicion and mistrust as possible. Among other things, he tried to curb military espionage on both sides of the border and recommended that both governments send identical instructions to their Balkan agents ordering them to cease activities aimed at weakening

108 HHStA, NA/1, Calice to Aehrenthal, Constantinople, 15 March 1900. Printed in Sutter, "Machtteilung als Bürgschaft des Friedens," 322-324.

109 Aehrenthal to Calice, St. Petersburg, 28 April 1900. Quoted in Sutter, "Machtteilung als Bürgschaft des Friedens," 320-321.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/h, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl. secret, Maria Grün bei Graz, 15 November 1901 (Wank, 1: No. 188). Aehrenthal wrote this letter while visiting his sister Johanna during his vacation.

114 Ibid., Fascicle XXXII/g, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, private and very confidential, No. 557, Vienna, 29 December 1901. Printed in Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 420-425.

each other's prestige.¹¹⁵ He again recommended that Austria-Hungary open an "active credit account" with Russia by adopting an obliging attitude toward Russian wishes in matters not directly related to its vital interests, such as the Far East, on which Vienna could draw in diplomatic conversations on Balkan questions.¹¹⁶ As a further step, Aehrenthal strongly endorsed frequent meetings between Emperor Francis Joseph and Tsar Nicholas II. The warm relations between the two rulers represented "valuable and until now little used capital" that could both pave the way for and periodically consolidate relations based on cooperation in Balkan affairs.¹¹⁷ At some time in the near future, when Russia was ready to conclude an agreement anticipating the collapse of the status quo, Aehrenthal envisioned a meeting between Emperor and Tsar that would set the stage for diplomacy to fuse together all of the threads of cooperation spun over the years so that "a peaceful, undisturbed development of the monarchy, internally as well as externally, would be guaranteed."¹¹⁸

The use of dynastic relations in diplomacy was plausible enough. The relationship between the two courts had improved greatly since Tsar Nicholas ascended the throne, and dynastic ties counted for something politically in both states, in which the crown still possessed traditional autocratic prerogatives in respect to foreign affairs.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, Aehrenthal's recommendation that dynastic relations be exploited for political ends was not exactly a welcome one to Emperor Francis Joseph, who found Russian behavior at the time irritating and unreliable. The emperor is reported to have said that "now Aehrenthal is completely Russian," and he tended to dismiss Aehrenthal's criticism of Gółuchowski's policy as an expression of some personal animus against the foreign minister.¹²⁰ At Aehrenthal's urging, however, Gółuchowski later played the dynastic card on several occasions.¹²¹

Along with the cultivation of better Austro-Russian relations, Aehrenthal recommended that Austria-Hungary endeavor to increase its influence in the Balkan Peninsula. Since Russia's distraction in the Far East prevented it from extending encouragement and support to the small Balkan states, Aus-

115 Ibid., PA X/116, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, R. 48B, St. Petersburg, 2 September 1901, and ibid., 121, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl. 2 secret, St. Petersburg, 16 July 1903.

116 Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, 15 November 1901 (same as n. 113 above).

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 See Prince Franz von Liechtenstein, "Der Kaiser und die Zaren," in Eduard von Steinitz, ed., *Erinnerungen an Franz Joseph I. Kaiser von Österreich, Apostolischer König von Ungarn* (Berlin 1931), 241–244, and Robert A. Kann, "Dynastic Relations and European Power Politics (1848–1918)," *Journal of Modern History* 45 (1973): 387–410.

120 HHStA, NA/2, Jettel to Aehrenthal, 26 April 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 164).

121 See, for example, 200, 202 below.

tria-Hungary might wean them from Russia by an obliging attitude.¹²² Consequently, Aehrenthal disapproved of Góuchowski's policy of chastising the Balkan states, especially Montenegro. He advised offering the Balkan states some "sugar along with the whip."¹²³ Aehrenthal saw all of his efforts to stimulate an independent and active diplomatic policy in the Balkan Peninsula frustrated by what he perceived as Góuchowski's timidity and his desire to avoid all complications. After reading a long dispatch from Góuchowski at the end of 1901 in which the foreign minister painted the situation in the Balkan Peninsula in very dark colors, Aehrenthal sarcastically wrote in the margin, "catastrophes everywhere!"¹²⁴

There was, of course, an inconsistency in Aehrenthal's policy recommendations. Nothing could be more inimical to the goal of fostering cooperation between Austria-Hungary and Russia than the suspicion of the latter that Austria-Hungary was seeking to increase its influence in the Balkan Peninsula at its expense. As Aehrenthal himself reported, the mere announcement of an impending visit to Vienna by King Alexander of Serbia was enough to make the Russian foreign minister, Count Muraviev, extremely "irritable."¹²⁵

There is some evidence that if Góuchowski had been more receptive to opportunities to enhance Austria-Hungary's position in the Balkans, Serbia might have fallen under Austria-Hungary's sway. Early in 1903, Góuchowski rejected secret Serbian proposals to surrender the railways and conclude a military convention and a customs union that would have made the kingdom a dependency of the monarchy.¹²⁶ Admittedly, the reduction of Serbia to a

¹²² Aehrenthal knew that Russia had to preserve close contact with Serbia and Montenegro, but he believed that Russia was not always the master in these relations. HHStA, NMa/1, Aehrenthal to Macchio, St. Petersburg, 13 September 1893. Macchio was at that time a secretary in the Austro-Hungarian legation in Belgrade.

¹²³ Ibid., Aehrenthal to Macchio, St. Petersburg, 1 June 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 168).

¹²⁴ HHStA, Botschaftsarchiv St. Petersburg, Vol. 3, Góuchowski to Aehrenthal, Ins. 556 secret, 29 December 1901 (Wank, 1: No. 189).

¹²⁵ HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/g, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, Pvl. 2 secret, St. Petersburg, 29 December 1899. In the summer of 1899, Joseph Maria Baernreither wrote in his diary, "Aehrenthal sharply criticized our inactive policy in the Balkans, especially in regard to Serbia. It did not matter which dynasty reigned there, Serbia had to remain in the Austrian sphere of power." Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches und die Deutschen: Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches, 1897-1917*, Oskar Mitis, ed. (Vienna, 1939), 109-110.

¹²⁶ See Wayne S. Vucinich, *Serbia between East and West: The Events of 1903-1908* (Stanford, 1954), 39. Góuchowski ignored other proposals by King Alexander as well (ibid., 39-40). Góuchowski also paid no attention to attempts by Prince Peter Karageorgević (after 1903 King Peter of Serbia) to curry favor in Vienna. In a letter that an aide of the prince transmitted to the Ballhausplatz, Prince Peter declared that his policy, if he should ascend the Serbian throne, would be one of status quo and good relations with Austria-Hungary that complied with its geographical position and economic interests. He intended to concentrate

virtual satellite of the Dual Monarchy would have depended on a number of Serbian political factors. However, since Gółuchowski believed that Austro-Hungarian policy required control of Serbia, it would seem that he might be faulted for having passed up an opportunity to achieve that end. His failure in this regard, which was typical of his cautious conduct of foreign policy, has led several historians to claim that his passivity at a time when the international situation offered possibilities for the consolidation of the monarchy's influence in the Balkan Peninsula was detrimental to its external and internal position.¹²⁷ There is some validity to the charge. The more fluid relations between states at that time and the shift of the focus of Russian foreign policy away from the Balkan Peninsula were more favorable to an active Balkan foreign policy than in the period after Gółuchowski's resignation.¹²⁸ However, such criticism of Gółuchowski is open to objections on several grounds.

It is true that Gółuchowski's policy was largely defensive. It had no definite aims beyond preventing a union of Montenegro with Serbia and "any action which might lead to a forcible solution to the Eastern question and a general European war."¹²⁹ For the rest, as he informed the Habsburg minister in Belgrade, "the agreement of 1897 might serve as the guide for his conduct."¹³⁰ Was there an alternative to Gółuchowski's policy of strict adherence to the 1897 agreement? Both Gółuchowski and Aehrenthal believed that Austria-Hungary's internal situation required peace and the preservation of the Balkan status quo for the foreseeable future. An active Balkan policy such as Aehrenthal urged certainly would have worked against those aims. He simply failed to see the inconsistency in wanting peace and proposing a potentially bellicose policy. Russia surely would have regarded the reduction of Serbia to a vassal state as contrary to the 1897 agreement. The consequence would have been an intensification of the Austro-Russian Balkan rivalry, carrying with it the possibility of war. The aggravated rivalry would have created conditions that might have emboldened Serbia and Montenegro, assured of Russian support, to challenge Austria-Hungary, and the Balkan states to contemplate an

on internal development and break away from the tendency to subordinate foreign policy to domestic political and party interests. A copy of Peter's letter, dated 12 November 1901, is in HHStA, PA I/477, Fascicle XXXIII/24-b.

127 See Hantsch, *Die Geschichte Österreichs*, 2: 501; Fellner, "Der Dreibund," in Fellner, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund*, 49; and Albertini, *The Origins of the War*, 1: 91.

128 Fritz Fellner (same as in previous note) states that in view of Gółuchowski's marked conservative and cautious policy, "it is idle to ask whether it really lay in the interest of the Danube Monarchy to tie its hands just when Russia had turned away from the Balkans."

129 Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, trans. Ian F. D. Morrow (Boston, 1932), 89–90. The German original was published under the title *Dreibund- und Entente-Politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt* (Zurich–Leipzig–Vienna, 1931), 158.

130 Dumba, *Memoirs*, 92. Dumba was minister in Belgrade from 1903 until 1905.

independent solution to the Turkish question in Europe. In a sense, that is what happened after the crisis surrounding the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 sparked a deadly duel for influence in the Balkan Peninsula between Austria-Hungary and Russia.

Relations between Austria-Hungary on the one hand and Montenegro and Serbia on the other are a classic case of how Great Power rivalries create conditions for independent policies on the part of small states. As long as Austria-Hungary and Russia adhered to their 1897 entente, which kept the Balkans "on ice," a challenge to the monarchy by Serbia or Montenegro was unthinkable. In fact, insofar as Góuchowski held to the 1897 agreement, Austria-Hungary enjoyed considerable freedom of action in those parts of the Balkan Peninsula adjacent to it. The often heavy-handed way in which Austria-Hungary exercised indirect control over Serbia and Montenegro, especially through repressive economic measures, was facilitated by the relatively low level of intensity in the Austro-Russian Balkan rivalry during Góuchowski's reign at the Ballhausplatz.¹³¹ This is not to deny that the monarchy might have derived greater benefits from a more active policy, but only to point out that its position in the Balkan Peninsula after 1897 was not quite so bad as one would think from Aehrenthal's letters and reports. His animosity toward Góuchowski, based on differences in temperament, policy, and the role of the foreign minister in domestic politics, led Aehrenthal to underestimate Austria-Hungary's position in the Balkans and to overestimate that of its rival. "Russia," Aehrenthal wrote to an Austro-Hungarian diplomatic colleague, "enjoys *everywhere*, therefore also in the Balkan Peninsula, greater prestige than we, her internal relations are still better than ours, and the leadership of foreign policy here [in St. Petersburg] is more resolute and more skillful than at the Ballhausplatz."¹³² A little over six months after this was written, Russia became involved in a disastrous war with Japan that resulted in a revolution at home.

Critics of Góuchowski's restrained foreign policy should not overlook the fact that the freedom of action enjoyed by Austria-Hungary under Góuchowski was the result of his refusal to pursue Aehrenthal's goal of hegemony in the western Balkans. The pursuit of the latter goal would have led to a far-reaching dependency on the German Empire, because the monarchy, as Aehrenthal discovered after becoming foreign minister, in view of its internal political and economic weaknesses, could not have conducted such a policy without German support. A corollary to Aehrenthal's more independent posi-

¹³¹ Vucinich, *Serbia*, 31-32, 178-179.

¹³² HHStA, NMa/1, Aehrenthal to Macchio, St. Petersburg, 20 July 1903 (Wank, 1: No. 223).

The emphasis is in the original. Macchio was minister to Montenegro (1899-1903).

tion in regard to Germany after the annexation of Bosnia in 1908 was a more restrained policy in the Balkan Peninsula.¹³³

As stated earlier, the conflict between Gołuchowski and Aehrenthal over long-range Austro-Hungarian goals in the Balkan Peninsula was for the moment largely academic. Both men saw the preservation of the status quo as necessary for quite a long time. In the meantime, Aehrenthal worked to improve the monarchy's position in the Balkan Peninsula. As part of his efforts along that line, he pressed Gołuchowski to strengthen the monarchy's economic interests in the Balkans by reviving and improving the operations of the commercial attachés. In this regard, he acted in conjunction with Joseph Maria Baernreither, who saw the Balkan market for Austro-Hungarian products as crucial to the preservation of the monarchy's status as a Great Power.¹³⁴ In 1903, Baernreither sent Aehrenthal a letter on the organization of the commercial (consular) service. In it, he criticized the weakness of this service, which suffered greatly under the difficulties of the dualistic structure. While commercial reporting was carried on in a unified and systematic way by the commercial attachés of the other Great Powers, that of Austro-Hungary's consular officials was hampered by Hungary's striving for greater independence in commercial questions.¹³⁵ In reply, Aehrenthal wrote, "What you say about the leadership of our commercial policy in relation to foreign trade are my own thoughts and accords with my own experiences."¹³⁶ More than most of his diplomatic colleagues, Aehrenthal appreciated the importance of economic factors as an element in the traditional game of power politics.

In relation to the economic expansion of the monarchy, Aehrenthal was an early supporter of the project to connect the Bosnian and Turkish railroads by a line through the Turkish-owned Sanjak of Novibazar, where, by virtue of Article Twenty-five of the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, Austria-Hungary had acquired the right to maintain garrisons and possess military and commercial routes.¹³⁷ However, whenever Austro-Hungarian, Serbian, or Russian news-

133 See chapters 12 and 13 in volume two, in preparation.

134 Bachmann, *Joseph Maria Baernreither*, 45–46.

135 HHStA, NA/1, Baernreither to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 27 June 1903 (Wank, 1: No. 217). Also printed in Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 128–133.

136 HHStA, NBa/48, Aehrenthal to Baernreither, St. Petersburg, 20 July 1903 (Wank, 1: No. 222). Partially printed in Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 132–133.

137 HHStA, PA X/113, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 14B confidential, St. Petersburg, 10 February 1900. See also Wank, "Aehrenthal and the Sanjak of Novibazar Railway Project," 356–359. Article Twenty-five of the Treaty of Berlin provides that "in order to ensure the maintenance of the new political status quo as well as preserve the freedom and security of the ways of communication, Austria-Hungary reserves to herself the right to maintain garrisons there and to have military and commercial routes in the whole area of the former vilayet of Bosnia." Schmitt, *The Annexation of Bosnia*, 3.

papers broached the subject, the Russian foreign ministry notified the Ballhausplatz that the projected railroad would involve a change in the status quo as prescribed by the 1897 agreement and had to be discussed beforehand with Russia.¹³⁸

In 1901, after one such inquiry, Aehrenthal counseled Gółuchowski to use strong language in reminding Russia that Austria-Hungary recognized no restrictions on her economic expansion southward. Gółuchowski, who wanted to let the matter drop, finally permitted Aehrenthal to discuss it with Count Vladimir Lamsdorff, who had replaced Muraviev as Russian foreign minister in 1900.¹³⁹

Aehrenthal countered Lamsdorff's view that the 1897 agreement established the status quo in the broadest sense of the term by insisting that it applied only in the political, not in the economic sphere.

The [Austro-Hungarian] government would not be able to approve such an interpretation, and in this case even less so, since the right of the monarchy to construct commercial and military roads in the Sanjak of Novibazar is clearly set forth in Article Twenty-five of the Treaty of Berlin ... For the moment, we do not intend to construct railways outside the border of Bosnia. If it should come to that, we would naturally first come to an agreement with the territorial power, i.e., Turkey.¹⁴⁰

Aehrenthal reminded Lamsdorff that this was the same procedure followed by Russia the previous year in her own railroad schemes in Asia Minor, although that was not an entirely relevant example, since Asia Minor was not covered by the 1897 agreement. Simply put, the Austro-Russian accord, in Aehrenthal's view, was valuable only if it protected the interests of both empires. Aehrenthal concluded, "If both maintain this viewpoint, they would be able to carry out their desires at any time."¹⁴¹ In his discussion with Lamsdorff, Aehrenthal perceived "that Russia desires today and in the near future to avoid...decisive change in Balkan politics, [she] desires not less intensely that developments there not favor us."¹⁴² Despite Russian sensitivities, Austria-Hungary, by virtue of the Treaty of Berlin, was a Balkan power, and, as far as Aehrenthal was concerned, "cannot subordinate its freedom of movement,

¹³⁸ Vucinic, *Serbia*, 31, 210.

¹³⁹ PA XII/344, Fascicle XXXVI/a, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, R. 5C, St. Petersburg, 19 January 1901.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

especially in the commercial–political sense, to the desires of Russia.”¹⁴³ In 1908, when Aehrenthal was foreign minister, this point of view found concrete expression in the launching of the Sanjak railroad project.¹⁴⁴

Aehrenthal’s position in 1901, as in 1908, with regard to Austria-Hungary’s right to construct the Sanjak railroad was legally correct, but it revealed the inadequacy of traditional diplomatic language, rooted as it was in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century traditions of cabinet diplomacy. As Michael Behnen points out, economic and financial activities and the construction of means of transportation that reach beyond borders alter the status quo even if not according to international law or territorially.¹⁴⁵ This was especially true in areas such as the Balkan Peninsula, where Austria-Hungary and Russia had overlapping and partly identical interests. In that region, a project such as the construction of the Sanjak railroad hardly could be realized “without calling into question the political status quo.”¹⁴⁶ The same was true with regard to Austro-Hungarian and Italian commercial and transportation projects in Albania and the eastern coast of the Adriatic sea.

There is an interesting sequel to this early episode concerning the Sanjak railroad project. Financial arrangements for the construction of a rail line from Sarajevo to Uvac, on the Bosnian border, were completed in 1902, and work was begun on the project in June of that year. Gołuchowski decided that the time had come to prepare for the eventual extension of the line through the Sanjak of Novibazar to Mitrovica, at the southern end of the province, by obtaining the Turkish sultan’s approval for it. In mid December 1902, Gołuchowski asked Berlin to support Vienna’s request in Constantinople. Berlin was evasive and replied that the time was not right, since there was so much unrest in the Balkans. However, Gołuchowski persisted, and the German chancellor, Count (1905 Prince) Bernhard von Bülow, told him that Germany would support the Sanjak railway project if Russia agreed to it in advance.¹⁴⁷ At the end of December, Count Lamsdorff, the Russian foreign minister, visited Vienna and, without saying anything definite, took a more-or-less obliging attitude toward the Austro-Hungarian interpretation of the 1897 agreement and toward the Sanjak railway that was in marked contrast to his earlier uncompromising position.¹⁴⁸ The change of heart probably was

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ See chapter 11 of volume two of this biography (in preparation).

¹⁴⁵ Michael Behnen, *Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit: Dreibund und informeller Imperialismus, 1900–1908* (Tübingen, 1985), 364–365.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 364.

¹⁴⁷ GP, 18/1: 213, note to No. 5495.

¹⁴⁸ A summary of Gołuchowski’s conversation with Lamsdorff dated 30 December 1902 is in HHStA, Botschaftsarchiv St. Petersburg, Fascicle 5, Balkan Reform, 1902–1903. The gist of

related to Lamsdorff's concern about unrest in Macedonia and his desire to obtain Austro-Hungarian cooperation to contain it.¹⁴⁹

After Lamsdorff's indirect acquiescence, Gołuchowski sent an official of the Wiener Bankverein to Berlin to seek financial support from the Deutsche Bank.¹⁵⁰ Gołuchowski's representative was told that the aid would be forthcoming if the German government recommended such a project; such a recommendation was never given.¹⁵¹ Rather summarily, the German documents mention fear of further Balkan unrest and a disinclination to arouse Russian anger.¹⁵² There is no mention of the financial negotiations that are discussed in the Austro-Hungarian documents. Berlin, and its ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Adolf Marschall, were, in fact, opposed to the Sanjak railway project, believing that it might cause difficulties for Germany's own Baghdad railway, for which the sultan had not yet granted the necessary concessions.¹⁵³ The German documents, therefore, are misleading, for they give the impression that it was Lamsdorff's failure to agree definitely to the railway project that forced Gołuchowski to refrain from taking any action in Constantinople. Bülow and Marschall, more than Lamsdorff, were responsible for that decision.¹⁵⁴

Gołuchowski dropped the project and did not return to it. No doubt, he saw little point in pushing it in the face of German reluctance and potential friction with Russia, despite Lamsdorff's more conciliatory attitude, when the construction of the rail line was still several years off. It is interesting to speculate whether Gołuchowski, by adopting a more assertive attitude, could have overridden Germany's objections and secured a formal Russian agreement on the Sanjak railway project. In any event, Gołuchowski's failure to be asser-

Lamsdorff's remarks to Gołuchowski and Emperor Francis Joseph concerning the Sanjak railway was telegraphed to Count Szögyény in Berlin. Ibid., PA XII/344, Fascicle XXXVI/a, T. 2, 5 January 1903. Szögyény, in turn, showed the telegram to the Wilhelmstrasse. After his return to St. Petersburg, Lamsdorff remarked to General Kuropatkin, the Russian minister of war, that he saw no way to oppose the Sanjak railway project. Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 46.

¹⁴⁹ See 198-201 below.

¹⁵⁰ HHStA, PA XII/344, Fascicle XXXVI/a, Szögyény to Gołuchowski, T. 15 confidential, 24 January 1903.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² See n. 147 above.

¹⁵³ Szögyény to Gołuchowski, 24 January 1903 (same as n. 150 above). Count (1914 Prince) Karl Wedel, the German ambassador in Vienna, remarked to Gołuchowski that Marschall's negative attitude was the result of his desire to keep the sultan's favor and that he "anxiously wants to avoid anything that could in any way be unpleasant for him [the sultan]." HHStA, PA XII/344, Gołuchowski to Szögyény, Ins. 924 very confidential, 24 December 1902.

¹⁵⁴ In view of the evidence, the conclusions on this point of Arthur James May and Wayne Vucinich are no longer valid. See May, "The Novibazar Railroad Project," *Journal of Modern History* 10 (1938): 501, and Vucinich, *Serbia*, 212.

tive in defense of Austro-Hungarian interests was exactly the kind of behavior that infuriated Aehrenthal. What was particularly galling to him was what he regarded as Gołuchowski's deference to German wishes.¹⁵⁵ Further, one may wonder what would have happened if Aehrenthal, a persistent advocate of an active and independent Austro-Hungarian diplomatic course in the Balkans, had been foreign minister at the time. One might argue that even if he had been in power in 1901–1902 and obtained a Turkish concession to construct the line, lack of sufficient domestic investment capital together with Hungarian opposition to the project, among other things, would have created a serious obstacle to its realization. Indeed, that is what happened when Aehrenthal obtained Turkish approval for the Sanjak railroad in 1908.¹⁵⁶

While seeking to strengthen Austria-Hungary's diplomatic and economic position in the Balkan Peninsula within the limits, as he understood them, of good Austro-Russian relations, Aehrenthal's prime concern was improving these relations in ways that would lead to the kind of Austro-Russian Balkan agreement that he saw as necessary for mastering the nationalities conflict in the monarchy. Diplomatically, Aehrenthal did not lack opportunities to bring Austria-Hungary closer to Russia.

The Balkan Peninsula was afflicted with many ills of which the most chronic was Macedonia. From the end of the 1890s it was the scene of a ceaseless and bloody rivalry between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia.¹⁵⁷ The 1895–1897 Near Eastern crisis had reverberations in Macedonia that prompted the Great Powers to interfere and propose that the sultan carry out reforms. However, the Turkish victory over the Greeks in the fall of 1897 inclined him to reject the demands of the powers. He could not and did not want to put an end to the warfare among the Macedonian Christians, since the strife sowed distrust and hostility among them and the Balkan states, and prevented the countries from uniting against Turkey.¹⁵⁸ Each year, as spring approached, the fear that the Macedonian fighting would precipitate a war between the Balkan states and Turkey made the Great Powers uneasy. No one feared this possibility more than Gołuchowski, and Lamsdorff, too, was frightened by the thought of 1876–1878 being reenacted at a most unfavorable time for Russia; that is, he feared that the intervention of Serbia or Bulgaria would lead to war with Turkey, which would arouse pan-Slavic emotions within Russia and force it to become involved in the war.

¹⁵⁵ See 262–268 below.

¹⁵⁶ See chapter 10 of volume two of this biography (in preparation).

¹⁵⁷ See Vucinich, *Serbia*, 24–31, and Elizabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London, 1950).

¹⁵⁸ Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 303–314, 355–383.

To Aehrenthal, the unrest in Macedonia presented just the occasion to proceed one step beyond the 1897 agreement and establish closer Austro-Russian relations. He inveighed against all plans for unilateral Austro-Hungarian action, especially the aggressive steps desired by the military.¹⁵⁹ Here was a chance to fashion real Austro-Russian cooperation and strengthen the monarchy's hand by making it, in conjunction with Russia, the strongest factor in the Balkans, without whose consent no change could take place. Unilateral action, Aehrenthal warned, also would prompt Italy to raise the question of compensation under Article Seven of the Triple Alliance treaty and demand an equal voice in Balkan affairs.¹⁶⁰

Gołuchowski, after instructing Aehrenthal to sound out Lamsdorff on his views concerning the Macedonian situation, did not take any further action. Lamsdorff, however, although at first rather lackadaisical, became increasingly alarmed as the fighting assumed greater proportions. After visits to Belgrade and Sofia at the end of 1902, where he urged restraint, he went to Vienna, where he reached an agreement with Gołuchowski on a plan of action.¹⁶¹ Aehrenthal was pleased by this outcome. "Lamsdorff's visit to Vienna appears to be a success," he wrote to his mother at the beginning of January 1903. "Now it will be a matter of cultivating further the good relations, because we are facing difficult times."¹⁶² Using proposals made by their respective ambassadors in Constantinople, the two governments drew up a reform program that was transmitted to the Porte (the Turkish foreign office) in February 1903.¹⁶³

It soon became clear that the sultan's acceptance of reform proposals did not mean that they would be put into effect. The Austro-Russian common front in the Macedonian question began to weaken in the months after the

159 HHStA, PA X/119, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 25A and 31B, 18 April and 13 May 1903. Aehrenthal was reacting to rumors that a special Austro-Hungarian army corps would invade Macedonia. See Behnen, *Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit*, 106.

160 HHStA, PA X/122, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 15A, 12 March 1904. Article Seven stipulated that if Austria-Hungary or Italy found it necessary to modify the status quo in the Balkans or the regions of the Ottoman coasts and islands in the Adriatic and Aegean Seas by a permanent or temporary occupation, the occupation would take place only after a previous agreement between them "based on the principle of a reciprocal compensation for every advantage, territorial or other, which each might obtain beyond the present status quo." Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 2: 225.

161 See Gołuchowski's summary of his discussion with Lamsdorff cited in n. 148 above. See also Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 35-36, and Vucinich, *Serbia*, 36-37.

162 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 7 January 1903.

163 The specific points of the program were reorganization of the gendarmerie and police, and improvement of the tax system. See Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 258; Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 36-37; and Vucinich, *Serbia*, 38.

Porte received the program.¹⁶⁴ By September, Góuchowski was hinting that the failure of joint Austro-Russian action pointed to a need for European intervention, i.e., all of the Great Powers.¹⁶⁵ In a letter to Count Franz Thun-Hohenstein, Aehrenthal wrote, "I am having some trouble holding my chief [Góuchowski] to the right line. As you know, he vacillates easily and often."¹⁶⁶ At this stage, Aehrenthal, who of course avidly supported the negotiations and joint Austro-Russian action, proposed to Góuchowski that the personal friendship between Tsar Nicholas and Emperor Francis Joseph be exploited to create an Austro-Russian common front in Balkan affairs. After delicate negotiations in which Aehrenthal played a conspicuous role, the two emperors and their foreign ministers, and, much to Góuchowski's vexation, also Aehrenthal, met at Francis Joseph's hunting lodge at Mürzsteg in Styria in October 1903.¹⁶⁷ The outcome of the meeting was the Mürzsteg Punctation (agreement), which set forth a program of administrative, judicial, and police reforms for Macedonia to be carried out under dual Austro-Hungarian and Russian control.¹⁶⁸ The Mürzsteg Punctation became the basis for Austro-Russian cooperation until the annexation of Bosnia in 1908.

Due to the motives of Góuchowski and Lamsdorff, the Mürzsteg agreement did not become, as Aehrenthal had hoped, the first step toward a broader understanding, or even one ensuring Austria-Hungary possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Góuchowski wanted an agreement with Russia to avoid trouble in the Balkans because of internal problems and a possible conflict with the

164 HHStA, PA X/119, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, R 25A and 31B, 18 April and 13 May 1903. See also Vucinich, *Serbia*, 38.

165 HHStA, PA XII/139, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, R. 53D, 10 September 1903.

166 SAD, RAT-H, A-3, XXIII/HI/b, Nr. 60/3, Aehrenthal to Franz Thun-Hohenstein, St. Petersburg, 17 September 1903 (Rutkowski, 2: No. 948).

167 See 161 above on Góuchowski's attempt to exclude Aehrenthal from the Mürzsteg meeting.

168 On the Mürzsteg conference see in general Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 264–265, and Gottfried zu Hohenlohe, "Die Jagd in Mürzsteg," in Steinitz, ed., *Erinnerungen an Franz Joseph I.*, 224–250. More specifically with regard to Aehrenthal, see Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 33–43. The Mürzsteg Punctation stipulated (1) Austro-Russian civil agents were to be attached to the Turkish inspector general as assistants and were to accompany him on all his inspection trips and report afterward to their respective governments; (2) a foreign general was to enter the Ottoman government to reorganize the gendarmerie with the help of assistants chosen from army officers of the Great Powers; (3) the rearrangement, after pacification, of the administrative districts to conform to ethnic grouping; (4) judicial and administrative reforms to include native Christians and develop local autonomy. Article Three stimulated Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece to support their conationals in Macedonia in order to stake out their claims before the ethnic division. The Mürzsteg Punctation is published in BD V: 64–67. See also Vucinich, *Serbia*, 125–130, and Albertini, *The Origins of the War*, 132–137.

“unreliable” Italian ally.¹⁶⁹ He also wanted to put a lid on the Macedonian troubles in order to thwart the idea of an autonomous Macedonia, which under Slav or Orthodox auspices would not be in Austria-Hungary's interest. The Münzsteg Punctuation achieved both aims. Further, he wanted to encourage the growth of Albanian nationalism as a counterweight to Slavic influence in the Balkans. This aim was to be attained by the projected administrative reorganization of Macedonia along ethnic lines, guaranteeing the consolidation of the predominantly Albanian areas.¹⁷⁰ Lamsdorff, on his part, wanted to prevent Balkan complications at a time when internal discontent in Russia was growing, and it was occupied in the Far East; but he also had personal reasons. By 1903, his position had been weakened by the removal of Far Eastern affairs from his jurisdiction and by pan-Slav accusations that he had betrayed Russia's historic mission in the Balkans. Lamsdorff knew that Tsar Nicholas favored closer Austro-Russian relations, and he was seeking to salvage his position by a success in that direction.¹⁷¹ Both Góuchowski and Lamsdorff had realized their immediate purposes and had no interest in proceeding further.

Attempts to Revive the Three Emperors' Alliance, 1904–1906

The outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in February 1904 provided Aehrenthal with another and more propitious opportunity to attain the broader agreement with Russia that had eluded him in the Münzsteg negotiations. This time, however, his goal was even more far-reaching. He wished to use Russia's predicament to resurrect the Three Emperors' Alliance.¹⁷² Ever since the spring of 1900, when he learned of Franco-Russian discussions on the partition of Austria-Hungary, Aehrenthal harbored a desire to revive this alliance as a way of safeguarding the monarchy's existence. He hoped that Russia's internal troubles would cause its leaders to conclude that this alliance also was the best policy for their country.¹⁷³

169 HHStA, PA XXI/139, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, R. 53D, 10 September 1903. See also Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 40–41.

170 See n. 168 above for Article Three of the Münzsteg Punctuation.

171 HHStA, PA XII/139, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, R. 53D, 10 September 1903. See also Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 41–42.

172 See Wilhelm M. Carlgren, “Die Renaissance des Dreikaiserbundes: Ein grosspolitischer Plan Aehrenthals im Jahre 1906,” *Historiskt Arkiv* 2 (1954): 1–14; and Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 48–49. See also Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 271–274.

173 Eurof Walters, “Franco-Russian Discussions on the Partition of Austria-Hungary in 1899,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 28 (1949): 184–197. See also HHStA, PA X/116, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, R. 45C, 16 August 1901; *ibid.*, 118, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, Pvl., 16 January 1902.

Shortly after the Japanese attack on Port Arthur, Aehrenthal informed Gołuchowski that Emperor William II had telegraphed his sympathies to the tsar.¹⁷⁴ The ambassador recommended that Emperor Francis Joseph take a similar step and, at the same time, emphasize his adherence to the Austro-Russian agreement of 1897; the resultant telegram, as Aehrenthal had calculated, was warmly received by Nicholas II.¹⁷⁵

The fortunes of war soon suggested a further step. At the beginning of the war, Aehrenthal, no doubt taking for granted the superiority of Europeans, even Russians, whom he considered to be on a lower cultural plane, over the "yellow race," wrote to his mother, "I have no doubt about the final success of Russia, in which the rest of the states of Europe have an interest."¹⁷⁶ Russian leaders were equally optimistic, but that mood soon gave way to one of pessimism and desperation after a series of severe military defeats in Manchuria and Korea. At the end of March 1904, Aehrenthal urged Gołuchowski to exploit the war situation to the monarchy's advantage: "I have the feeling that the time is approaching when we should attempt to place our relations with Russia on a broader, more secure foundation."¹⁷⁷ Tsar Nicholas had remarked to Prince Gottfried von Hohenlohe, the Austro-Hungarian military attaché in St. Petersburg, that, confident in the assurances of Emperor William II and Emperor Francis Joseph, he (the tsar) would not hesitate, if the need should arise, to remove troops from the German and Austro-Hungarian frontiers in order to send them to the Far East. Aehrenthal suggested that Austria-Hungary and Russia make the "denuding" of their common Eastern frontier of Russian troops the basis of a treaty.¹⁷⁸

Aehrenthal favored a defensive treaty in which both empires pledged benevolent neutrality in case either found itself at war with a European power. He stressed the value of such a treaty for protecting Austria-Hungary's rear in the event of a war with Italy, which Gołuchowski and the Austro-Hungarian general staff believed, on very flimsy evidence, was imminent.¹⁷⁹ In the

174 HHStA, PA X/122, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, T. 25, 9 February 1904.

175 Ibid., PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, T. 42, 29 February 1904.

176 SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 22 February 1904 (Adlgasser, 2: 848–849). German chancellor Bülow also thought the Russians would win. He was much more worried about the effect of Hungarian separatist demands on the unity and strength of the Austro-Hungarian army. See Aehrenthal's report of a conversation with Bülow in HHStA, PA X/121, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 20 December 1903.

177 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 24 March 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 242).

178 Ibid.

179 The "war scare" of 1904 was fueled by irredentist demonstrations in Italy and alleged Italian military preparations for a landing in Albania. Beyond that, it served on both sides to justify new weapons programs pushed by arms manufacturers and general staffs. See

face of the threat, "it appears to me," Aehrenthal wrote, "we have greater need of the Galician troops in South Tyrol and on the frontier of Carinthia than in Cracow or Przemyśl!"¹⁸⁰ Balkan questions could be left out, but if they were included in the negotiations, Aehrenthal suggested that an attempt be made to acquire a new Russian agreement to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He believed this was necessary because of Russia's 1897 reservation. As compensation, Austria-Hungary could promise not to expand its occupation of the Sanjak of Novibazar and to limit the annexation of the occupied provinces to the Lim River line. That was the price, Aehrenthal told Gołuchowski, that Benjamin von Kállay, the late common minister of finance and head of the Bosnian administration (1882-1903), was willing to pay for a treaty with Russia. Aehrenthal was convinced, however, that the Russians would propose as compensation Austro-Hungarian support of the Russian interpretation of the straits convention, i.e., exclusive passage for Russian ships of war.¹⁸¹

Gołuchowski agreed to the conclusion of the neutrality treaty and to the broadening of the negotiations into a discussion of Balkan questions, provided Russia took the initiative.¹⁸² However, he withdrew his conditional readiness to discuss an agreement on the future solution of Balkan questions at the end of May 1904, fearing a drastic change in the Russian government that might alter the course of Russian foreign policy.¹⁸³ Even his earlier, conditional readiness to discuss Balkan questions had not included negotiations to acquire a new Russian agreement to Austria-Hungary's eventual annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As in the past, Gołuchowski was unwilling to recognize the Russian reservation. He wrote to Aehrenthal, "We could not approve that the rights recognized by Russia in earlier agreements should be placed in question and become the object of future negotiations."¹⁸⁴

The treaty that Aehrenthal sketched out in his letter to Gołuchowski of 24 March became the basis, seven months later, for the final protocol, which contained a neutrality agreement but excluded Balkan questions. After long and skillful negotiations in which Aehrenthal overcame the Russian foreign minister's resistance to putting the mutual assurances of neutrality in writing, Aehrenthal and Lamsdorff signed a neutrality declaration on 15 October

Behnen, *Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit*, 100-109, and Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 133-142.

180 Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 24 March 1904 (same as n. 177 above).

181 Ibid.

182 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl., Vienna, 13 April 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 245).

183 Ibid., Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl., Budapest, 28 May 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 248).

184 Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, 13 April 1904 (same as n. 182 above).

1904, to remain valid as long as their entente in Balkan and Turkish affairs existed.¹⁸⁵

Aehrenthal attributed Lamsdorff's wariness about a treaty to "the well-known resistance of Russian diplomacy to any binding agreements,"¹⁸⁶ but Lamsdorff's resistance was based on more substantial grounds. He was not able to find a convincing political connection between the entente policy and the neutrality agreement, in the absence of which it was difficult to justify a special treaty. Tsar Nicholas thought it superfluous to inscribe the idea of reciprocal confidence in a treaty. At that point, Aehrenthal exerted pressure on the Russian foreign minister by warning, "if we do not reach a mutually satisfactory arrangement concerning the matter now raised, the raising of the same would have the opposite effect from that originally desired."¹⁸⁷ Lamsdorff then proposed drawing a connection between the neutrality declaration and the Austro-Russian entente by inserting a clause containing a vague pledge of common defense of the principles of the entente against every power, therefore also against Italy. Aehrenthal modified and broadened Lamsdorff's proposal to include a common front against injuries to the status quo and the balance of power elsewhere, i.e., outside the Balkan Peninsula. Lamsdorff accepted this because it took into consideration actions on the part of England that in his eyes threatened the status quo outside the Balkans.¹⁸⁸ The neutrality clause of the 1904 declaration pledged "loyal and absolute neutrality" if either country found itself "alone and without provocation on its part in a state of war with a Third Power which sought to endanger its security or the status quo."¹⁸⁹ That wording made the neutrality declaration compatible with the letter of the strictly defensive 1879 Austro-German and 1894 Russo-French treaties.¹⁹⁰ Aehrenthal's adroit diplomacy in effect rescued the agreement.

185 The documents related to the neutrality treaty are located in HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k. The neutrality declaration is printed in Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 236–239. See also Carlgren, "Die Renaissance des Dreikaiserbundes," 1–15, and Behnen, *Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit*, 109–113.

186 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 15 July 1904.

187 Ibid., Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 14 May 1904. On the resistance of Lamsdorff and the tsar see also Carlgren, "Die Renaissance des Dreikaiserbundes," 7–9, and Behnen, *Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit*, 111–112.

188 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 14 July 1904. Gółuchowski approved Aehrenthal's revision. Ibid., Dispatch No. 969, 1 October 1904.

189 Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 237.

190 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Gółuchowski to Aehrenthal, Dispatch No. 969, 1 October 1904.

The Austro-Russian neutrality declaration stipulated that it could not be communicated to any other government without a prior understanding between the two governments. However, at the outset of the negotiations, Góuchowski informed Aehrenthal that he intended to notify Berlin of its existence after it had been signed, in order to avoid the duplicity of Bismarck, who had concluded the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887 behind Austria-Hungary's back.¹⁹¹ Aehrenthal, on the other hand, did not consider it necessary to inform Berlin. "It undoubtedly would be progress in our relations with Russia," Aehrenthal wrote Góuchowski, "if we and [Russia] together had a secret to protect."¹⁹² Only under two conditions did he advise informing Berlin: (1) if Russia approved communicating the treaty to Berlin; and (2) if the revelation of the treaty would lead to the renaissance of the Three Emperors' Alliance.¹⁹³ Aehrenthal proposed that the German emperor be informed by an exchange of letters of the three sovereigns concerned and not directly by a personal embassy from Emperor Francis Joseph, as Góuchowski wanted.¹⁹⁴ In any event, try as he might, Aehrenthal was unable to persuade Góuchowski to follow the course he recommended. Italy, of course, was not informed.

The news of the Austro-Russian neutrality declaration was not welcome to the German foreign ministry, which, although it officially declared the declaration to be a further guarantee of the status quo and peace of Europe, was deeply disappointed. The agreement with Russia signaled Vienna's readiness to follow a political course that not only ignored the Triple Alliance but was partially directed against an alliance partner — Italy. German statesmen also feared that the neutrality declaration would lessen the importance to Vienna of the Dual Alliance of 1879. The bilateral Austro-Russian agreement was a blow to Chancellor Bülow. From the time of Bismarck, it had been a fundamental maxim of German foreign policy that the road to good Austro-Russian relations must pass through Berlin. Now Bülow had to recognize that the road was no longer completely under German control.¹⁹⁵ For Austro-Hungarian diplomacy and above all for its originator, Aehrenthal, who worked steadily to combat the all-too-great German influence in both Vienna and St. Petersburg, the neutrality treaty was a clear success. The position of the Habsburg Monarchy had been strengthened not only against Russia and Italy, but also

191 Góuchowski to Aehrenthal, 13 April 1904 (same as n. 182 above).

192 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 14 June 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 249).

193 Ibid.

194 Ibid., Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, T. 161 and 163, 27 October 1904.

195 On Austro-German relations and Aehrenthal's attitude toward his German ally see 219-223 below.

against its powerful ally — Germany. The chagrin in Berlin was somewhat hypocritical. The Germans, too, were wooing Russia in an attempt to improve their security situation through a bilateral agreement with the tsarist empire. The abortive Treaty of Björkö of July 1905, which aimed at eliminating the possibility of a two-front war for Germany, was concluded without any prior notice to Vienna.¹⁹⁶

The negotiations with Russia in 1904 might not have resulted in an Austro-Russian agreement on the future shape of things in the Balkans, but Aehrenthal was pleased with what had been accomplished. While he appreciated the value of the neutrality agreement in case of a conflict with Italy, which is what Gołuchowski regarded as its most important feature,¹⁹⁷ Aehrenthal saw its value more in terms of Austro-Russian relations and the strengthening of relations among the three Eastern empires. In his view, the neutrality declaration confirmed and consolidated the agreement of 1897 and the Münzsteg Punctuation of 1903, and was another step toward the development of a good relationship between Austria-Hungary and Russia.¹⁹⁸ Even more, he saw, flowing from the neutrality treaty, the extension of the Austro-Russian entente to general political relations inside and outside Europe. Here he was probably reading too much into the vague language of the treaty. It is hard to imagine Austria-Hungary and Russia taking up the sword together against, say, actions by England or Italy threatening to the status quo outside the Balkans. Be that as it may, the neutrality treaty was a significant accomplishment for Aehrenthal.

Aehrenthal expressed his satisfaction at what had been achieved in a letter to his friend Prince Karl Schwarzenberg, who was a warm supporter of closer Austro-Russian relations:

The unity and mutual confidence of the three great monarchies gives European relations a firm foundation. After much vacillation *de part et d'autre*, we happily have

196 The Björkö treaty, the result of personal diplomacy of Emperor William and Tsar Nicholas, provided for a Russo-German defensive alliance against attack by any other power in Europe. Russia undertook to inform France of the treaty and invite it to sign as an ally. The Germans hoped for a continental alliance against England. The Russian foreign office prevailed upon the tsar to disavow it as incompatible with the Franco-Russian alliance. See Albertini, *The Origins of the War*, 159–161. On German bilateral efforts to detach Russia from France, see Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy 1871–1914* (London, 1976), 99–104.

197 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl., 1 September 1904.

198 In this regard, Michael Behnen's claim that the aim of covering Austria-Hungary's rear in the event of a war with Italy was as important to Aehrenthal as strengthening the Austro-Russian entente is, in my opinion, incorrect when viewed in the context of Aehrenthal's diplomatic thought and activity since the late 1880s. See Behnen, *Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit*, 110.

returned to the above relationship. The monarchy now has its *two natural* friends: Germany and Russia. It fills me with satisfaction to have participated in this favorable development.¹⁹⁹

How much more crushing, then, was the outbreak of revolution in Russia in January 1905. The collapse of tsarist power, signaled by the promulgation of the October Manifesto of 1905, which ushered in constitutional-parliamentary government,²⁰⁰ seemed to dash all his hopes for "a more intimate understanding" with Russia held out by the neutrality treaty. Despondently, Aehrenthal wrote to Archduke Francis Ferdinand, a leading advocate of closer relations with Russia and of the Three Emperors' Alliance,

I need not emphasize especially in what bad temper I am at the catastrophic turn of events in the tsarist empire. A melancholy feeling creeps over one when one had to witness how Russia, which has finally entered into a correct relationship with the monarchy, now tears itself to pieces!²⁰¹

If only indirectly, Aehrenthal's despair points to the inadequacy of traditional cabinet politics in the context of twentieth-century social and political forces.

The outbreak of revolution in Russia, as pointed out earlier, heightened Aehrenthal's political anxiety. He pursued the fate of the tsarist autocracy with deep concern, and not only for the future course of Austro-Russian relations. The weakening of monarchical authority in Russia, Aehrenthal believed, would seriously weaken the efforts of monarchical and conservative forces in Austria-Hungary to master the social revolution before being overwhelmed by it. He saw, correctly, that events in Russia could have a catalytic effect on internal problems not only there, but in the Habsburg Monarchy as well. "The unparalleled defeats of Russia," he wrote to Mérey, "have hastened not only the Norwegian but the Magyar crisis as well."²⁰² Neither would have

¹⁹⁹ SAT-O, RAS, Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, St. Petersburg, 2 October 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 255). The emphasis is in the original. Aehrenthal added, "It is, however, high time that our friends, the Russians, have more luck in this horrible war. Russian victories could lead to an end in the foreseeable future. Failures drag the conflict on endlessly and create a very precarious situation! From the monarchical standpoint, the latter especially would be highly regrettable and of far-reaching consequences."

²⁰⁰ The Manifesto of 17 October 1905 also proclaimed a broad franchise and civil liberties. See Florinsky, *Russia*, 2: 1178-1179.

²⁰¹ HHStA, NFF/16, Aehrenthal to Francis Ferdinand, Prague, 23 November 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 287).

²⁰² Ibid., NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, St. Petersburg, 22 June 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 275). Aehrenthal's references are to the separation of Norway from Sweden in 1905 and to the conflict between Emperor Francis Joseph and Hungarian leaders over the use of the Hungarian

happened, he wrote to his mother, if the tsarist empire had maintained its earlier Great Power position.²⁰³ In the face of revolution in Russia and the specter of revolution in Austria-Hungary — agitation for universal male suffrage in Austria and constitutional conflict between Emperor Francis Joseph and the Magyars in Hungary — Aehrenthal embarked on his own campaign to rescue tsarism.

Aehrenthal's first effort at intervention, undertaken in the fall of 1905 in cooperation with his friend Paul von Schwanebach, an arch-conservative Baltic-German high Russian official, sought to bring about the downfall of Russia's first constitutional prime minister, Count Sergei Witte.²⁰⁴ In the eyes of Aehrenthal and Schwanebach, Witte's program of rapid economic modernization inaugurated in the 1890s, when the latter was minister of finance (1892–1903), seriously weakened the foundations of tsarism. In a report to Gołuchowski in 1903, Aehrenthal characterized Witte as a destroyer of the traditional order of state and society and a protector of the Jews, who, according to Aehrenthal, inspired the revolution.²⁰⁵ After Witte became prime minister in October 1905, Aehrenthal and Schwanebach regarded his advocacy of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government not only as a blow to tsarist autocracy, but as nothing less than treasonable capitulation to revolutionary and anarchic forces bent on destroying Russia. They concluded that if Russia were to be saved, Witte would have to go.

language in the army. The conflict, which began in 1902, became so acute by 1905 that the operations section of the general staff drew up "Kriegsfall U[ngarn]," a plan to use the Austro-Hungarian army to break Hungarian opposition. See Kurt Peball and Gunther Rothenberg, "Der Fall U. Die geplante Besetzung Ungarns durch die k.u.k. Armee im Herbst 1905," *Schriften des Heeresgeschichtlichen Museums in Wien* 4 (1969): 85–126. See also Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, 134–135.

203 SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, Tsarskoe Selo, 25 June 1905 (Adlgasser, 2: 885).

204 See Hans Heilbronner, "An Anti-Witte Diplomatic Conspiracy, 1905–1906: The Schwanebach Memorandum," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 14 (1966): 347–361. Schwanebach served under Witte in the ministry of finance, later becoming minister of agriculture (1905) and a treasury official. *Ibid.*, 347–348. Heilbronner is incorrect in stating that Aehrenthal and Schwanebach first met in 1904 (*ibid.*, 347). Already in 1893, Aehrenthal told his father that on a trip to Moscow "I met two good acquaintances, two Balts, Baron Ungern-Sternberg and Herr von Schwanebach, and could spend a great deal of time with them." SAL, RAA/123, St. Petersburg, 18 November 1893 (Adlgasser, 1: 530–531). On Aehrenthal and Schwanebach see also Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 1: 54–55. Aehrenthal continued his contacts with Schwanebach even after he became foreign minister. Several letters exchanged between them are deposited in HHStA, PA X/129 and 130, and in *ibid.*, NA/3. Most of Schwanebach's letters are long analyses of Russian internal conditions. See Wank 1: No. 304 and 2: Nos. 372 and 420.

205 HHStA, PA X/120, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 53B, 10 September 1903. See also Heilbronner, "An Anti-Witte Diplomatic Conspiracy," 348–349.

The plotters sought to achieve their goal by persuading Emperor William II to use his considerable influence on his Russian cousin, who in any case disliked Witte, to dismiss the prime minister. That task was not an easy one. Witte was held in high esteem in Berlin at the time. The Russian prime minister was an advocate of Russo-German reconciliation, and Emperor William hoped to win French assent to the Björkö treaty with Witte's help. On his return journey from America, where he had negotiated the peace with Japan, Witte had an audience with the emperor, who appeared "not unsatisfied" with the visit.²⁰⁶ In order to convince Emperor William that Witte was a dangerous man, Schwanebach prepared a memorandum detailing the prime minister's political sins and the dangers that threatened Russia as a result of the disastrous course that he was following.²⁰⁷ Aehrenthal then transmitted the memorandum to the German emperor through Szögyény.²⁰⁸

Afraid that the German chancellor, Prince Bernhard von Bülow, might refuse to pass the anti-Witte diatribe on to the emperor, Aehrenthal took the precaution of sending another copy to Emperor William's good friend, Prince Max Egon von Fürstenberg,²⁰⁹ and as Szögyény did not fail to inform Bülow of Fürstenberg's receipt of a copy of the memorandum, Bülow had little choice but to pass it on to the emperor.²¹⁰ In reply to Aehrenthal, Fürstenberg acknowledged receiving the "interesting enclosure" but did not express his opinion on its contents.²¹¹ In fact, Fürstenberg, like Bülow and Emperor William, took a very skeptical attitude toward it. The emperor did not even read it, but dismissed it on the basis of Fürstenberg's negative assessment of its ideas as "queer" and of the entire memorandum as a "botched piece" suitable for the editorial page of a second- or third-rate newspaper.²¹² Yet, although Fürstenberg thereby doomed Aehrenthal's plan to bring about the German emperor's intervention, it may have planted a seed of doubt in Berlin that may have

206 The quoted word is from a letter by Prince Max Egon Fürstenberg, Emperor William's friend, to Aehrenthal. HHStA, NA/1, Donaueschingen, 20 November 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 286). In the same letter, Fürstenberg writes that William recognized very well the relationship of the tsar to Witte — an allusion to the tsar's hostility to the prime minister — "as well as the strengths and failings of the personality of the latter." See also Albertini, *The Origins of the War*, 161.

207 For a summary of Schwanebach's memorandum, see Heilbronner, "An Anti-Witte Diplomatic Conspiracy," 350-352.

208 Ibid., 352.

209 This is clear from Fürstenberg's reply to Aehrenthal's letter (see n. 206 above).

210 Bülow informed Emperor William that Aehrenthal had sent a copy to Fürstenberg. See Heilbronner, "An Anti-Witte Diplomatic Conspiracy," 352, n. 17.

211 Fürstenberg to Aehrenthal, 20 November 1905 (same as n. 206 above).

212 These judgments are contained in a telegram from William II to Bülow, 25 November 1905. Heilbronner, "An Anti-Witte Diplomatic Conspiracy," 353.

contributed along with other things to diminishing the German government's interest in preventing Witte's downfall in April 1906.²¹³

Be that as it may, the anti-Witte plot was of some significance in terms of Aehrenthal's efforts to revive the Three Emperors' Alliance. In his letter to Fürstenberg, Aehrenthal vaguely hinted that Nicholas II himself had ordered Schwanebach to write the memorandum for the information of his brother monarchs in Germany and Austria-Hungary. No doubt the lesson to be learned was that the three conservative rulers could defeat the revolution by mutually supporting one another in the fight against revolutionary currents. Fürstenberg, in his reply, expressed his sympathy with "the *great idea* of close cooperation of the three emperors." He went on to say that in the interest of that idea, "it certainly would be warmly greeted if you...would continue to maintain *especially* warm and good relations with the representative of the German Empire in St. Petersburg." It appeared to him that "this alone could guarantee the accomplishment of those intentions you allude to in your letter."²¹⁴ Fürstenberg professed to be speaking only for himself, but it may be assumed that his views reflected German suspicions of Aehrenthal's efforts at closer relations with Russia after their own attempt at an alliance with Russia had foundered.

The fall of the Witte cabinet did not end Aehrenthal's concern over the course of events in Russia. In May 1906, the newly created Russian duma met for the first time, and by July, tsar and duma were at loggerheads over demands for far-reaching Western-style political and agrarian reforms, which entailed drastic constitutional changes that would undermine autocracy in Russia. In court circles, efforts were being made to persuade the vacillating emperor to dissolve the duma.²¹⁵ In this atmosphere, Aehrenthal wrote two secret letters to Gółuchowski, dated 20 and 25 July, in which he again sought to revive the Three Emperors' Alliance.

In his letter of 20 July, Aehrenthal warned that the Russian monarchy faced the question of "to be or not to be."²¹⁶ The demagoguery of various duma

213 Some other things were the tsar's hostility to Witte and Witte's later agreement with the Russian foreign office's negative view of the Björkö treaty. Albertini, *The Origins of the War*, 161, and Heilbroner, "An Anti-Witte Diplomatic Conspiracy," 354–355.

214 Fürstenberg to Aehrenthal, 20 November 1905 (same as in n. 206 above). The emphasis is in the original.

215 Florinsky, *Russia*, 2: 1190–1192.

216 HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/1, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl., No. 1 secret, St. Petersburg, 20 July 1906 (Wank, 1: No. 299). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from this document. The emphasis is in the original. For Aehrenthal's 1906 plan to resurrect the Three Emperors' League, I have drawn on my article "Varieties of Political Despair," 221–227. See also Carlgren, "Die Renaissance des Dreikaiserbundes," 14–26, and Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 297–316.

(parliament) members had agitated the masses and intensified unrest in the country. The creation of a parliamentary cabinet, whose members would come mostly from the ranks of the liberal Constitutional Democrats, would try to establish the authority of the duma over that of the tsar. "If the prestige and power of the emperor were not clearly demonstrated, then we are in the middle of the *Götterdämmerung* of the House of Romanov." For Aehrenthal, it was unquestioned that "our sympathies and interests" lay on the side of Tsar Nicholas: "only a Russia in which the word of the emperor still counts for something is a possible ally and a peaceful neighbor for Austria-Hungary and Germany."

Tsar Nicholas and his closest advisers had the right intentions, but they lacked the will to carry them out. Something had to be done "to stiffen the spine" of the emperor. Aehrenthal recommended that the German and Austro-Hungarian emperors meet with Tsar Nicholas and through an exchange of letters pledge adherence to conservative and monarchical principles. If he were so instructed, Aehrenthal proposed that at the time he delivered Emperor Francis Joseph's letter of sympathy and encouragement, he would sound out Tsar Nicholas on his intentions and "explore the terrain for eventual further action," by which he meant the re-creation of the Three Emperors' Alliance. Should the Russian "ship of state" survive the present storm "damaged but not a total wreck," it would be the task of Austria-Hungary to take it in tow, "and bring it into the safe harbor of the reconstituted Three Emperors' Alliance."

Assuming the survival of the Russian "ship of state," Aehrenthal now posited the renunciation by Russia of its alliance "with republican and atheistic France" as a preeminent condition for the realization of his plan. A further condition would be Germany's adherence to the October 1904 Austro-Russian declaration of peace and friendship. Once these conditions had been fulfilled, the way would be opened for the three imperial powers to reconcile their Balkan rivalries in the name of monarchical solidarity against the dangers of "socialism and anarchism." To meet the eventuality of a collapse of the Balkan status quo, Aehrenthal proposed the following agreement: for Austria-Hungary, consent to the eventual annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the precise delineation of its political-strategic position in the Sanjak of Novibazar; for Russia, continuation of Turkish control over Constantinople and small territorial gains for its Balkan client states — Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria; and for Germany, the removal of Russian opposition to the Baghdad railway. The more modest scope of Aehrenthal's new Balkan order as compared with earlier ones was no doubt the result of internal Austro-Hungarian crisis and his feeling that in view of Russia's weakness, which he was again quite ready to exploit, Austria-Hungary could get a guarantee for Bosnia and Herzegovina

without yielding the straits. With the questions of the future control of Constantinople and the straits excluded, Aehrenthal had to exclude his own *quid pro quo*. In view of Russia's weakness and the increase of German influence in Turkey, Aehrenthal thought that the assurance that no other power would become master of Constantinople would be an attractive concession to Russia.

After establishing harmony among themselves, the three imperial powers could then turn to the urgent task of combating revolutionary and radical currents. The growing significance of the Interparliamentary Union constituted "an alarm signal" for all monarchs. Aehrenthal maintained that the last conference of the Union in London had come "under the influence of strongly prevailing socialist tendencies," which was in fact hardly the case. Further, the creation of a permanent executive body had been ventilated, even a "parliament of parliaments" that would establish new relationships between peoples over the heads of monarchs and governments. Aehrenthal's exaggerated views of the moderate Interparliamentary Union might be attributed to his heightened political anxiety, but it might also have been a tactic to impress Gołuchowski with the urgency of the situation. The peace movement, which was used by the socialists to stir up agitation among the masses, constituted for Aehrenthal another danger. In the final analysis, the peace movement, which he incorrectly saw as largely socialist sponsored, was opposed to the idea of heroism "without which a monarchical order is unthinkable." Not insensitive to the burden placed on society by escalating military budgets, Aehrenthal proposed that the three imperial courts counteract the agitation of the international peace movement by broaching the question of limitation of armaments on their own and by reducing their military spendings: "It would be quite a different matter for the three most powerful monarchs, through a spontaneous decision, to put off and lessen the danger of war by simultaneous reduction in their respective military budgets." Aehrenthal argued that such action would not endanger the ability of the three governments to maintain internal order, since a smaller, well-equipped, professional army would be more reliable as an instrument of repression than large conscript armies.

Aehrenthal had no illusions about the difficulties involved in realizing his plan, but they were, in his view, all surmountable. Russian fear of Emperor William's "alleged" lust for world power and the ranting of the pan-Germans was a considerable obstacle. However, Germany's adherence to the 1904 Austro-Russian neutrality treaty would dissolve that fear. Tsar Nicholas, for internal reasons, desired the renewal of the Three Emperors' Alliance, and Aehrenthal believed that he could deal with the Russian foreign minister, Alexander Izvolsky, whom he considered a reliable supporter of the Austro-Russian entente, if not of the Three Emperors' Alliance. Despite the liberal tendencies

that pulled him toward the Western powers, Izvolsky, Aehrenthal conjectured, was a clever opportunist who would adopt a conservative foreign policy in keeping with a drift in that direction internally.²¹⁷

Aehrenthal concluded by reporting that he had discussed his plan with Baron Wilhelm von Schoen, the German ambassador, who was favorably impressed by it and who assured him that Berlin would welcome the revival of the Three Emperors' Alliance. Aehrenthal asked Góuchowski whether he wanted to give him instructions for new conversations with Schoen in order to proceed with the project. In apocalyptic tones, he advised Góuchowski that "in the struggle against the threatening dictatorship of the proletariat, a dictatorship which in the end can lead only to a satanic chaos," delay was dangerous. A renewed Three Emperors' League was vital to "secure the dams against the flood of the purely materialistically inclined proletariat, in which there is a complete absence of every divine spark."

Aehrenthal's report of his conversation with Schoen was distorted. He interpreted the German ambassador's remarks in a consciously brief and tendentious manner. Schoen was, in reality, critical of Aehrenthal's plan, believing that Berlin would veto a measure that might be construed as an intervention in Russian internal affairs in favor of a reactionary policy. Moreover, Schoen believed that a constitutional regime in Russia would end the constant threat of revolution.²¹⁸ Aehrenthal did not mention Schoen's reservations to Góuchowski, since the foreign minister, who in 1904 had ignored his plan for the Three Emperors' Alliance, would be even less well disposed at this time. Misleading Góuchowski, however, was hardly consistent with Aehrenthal's

217 In view of Aehrenthal's later antagonistic relationship with Izvolsky, his earlier views of the Russian foreign minister are of interest. In a report in 1900, he described Izvolsky as a clever and talented man about whose loyalty and frankness he was not able to judge (HH-StA, PA X/113, R. 9C, 27 January 1900). In 1904, he wrote to Mérey that the appointment of Izvolsky as ambassador in Vienna would not be a "misfortune," since he was an intelligent person and would not be difficult to deal with (ibid., NM/1, 31 March 1904). In August 1906, Aehrenthal informed Góuchowski that he was distrustful of Izvolsky's liberalism and opportunism (ibid., PA X/129, R. 30C, 14 August 1906). Aehrenthal's negative attitude can be traced in part to Izvolsky's opposition to Schwanebach and to the dissolution of the duma. By October 1906, he was writing to Góuchowski that he perceived traits of vanity and conceit in Izvolsky's personality (ibid., PA X/130, Pvl., 13 October 1906). Izvolsky attributed his departure as foreign minister in 1910 in part to the intrigues of Schwanebach and complained that Aehrenthal's whole policy was based on information that he had obtained from Schwanebach. While this was not completely true, neither was Aehrenthal's disclaimer of having had only infrequent contact with Schwanebach after 1906. He might have met him only once, but there were frequent exchanges of letters in 1906-1908 (see n. 204 above). See also ÖUA III, No. 2403, Mensdorff to Aehrenthal, 2 January 1911, and No. 2417, Aehrenthal to Berchtold, 18 January 1911.

218 GP 22, No. 7357, Schoen to Bülow, St. Petersburg, 18 July 1906.

remark to his friend Franz von Schiessl that he was “unalterably opposed to false situations.”²¹⁹

Shortly after Aehrenthal sent off his first letter, Tsar Nicholas dissolved the *duma*. This stimulated Aehrenthal to write again to Gołuchowski.²²⁰ Aehrenthal saw in the proroguing of the *duma* a demonstration by the tsar of his determination to prevent any encroachments on the sphere of monarchical prerogatives. The tsar’s demonstration of a “firm will” would, Aehrenthal believed, “exert a wholesome influence on the restoration of obedience in the people as well as in the army.” In this, Aehrenthal saw the fulfillment of one of the preliminary conditions for a rapprochement of the three imperial courts. Now was the time for Emperor Francis Joseph to give Nicholas his “*moral support*” and to “express his pleasure” with his strong stand against the *duma*. The parliament, Aehrenthal wrote, “wanted to reduce the tsar to a Russian Dalai Lama.” If Tsar Nicholas did not emerge victorious in his conflict with the *duma*, then the next step, Aehrenthal predicted, “is the formation of several republics with strong communist tendencies.” The creation of such republics “would not stop at our borders.” In 1849, Tsar Nicholas I of Russia had intervened in Prussia and Austria in his “*own interest*” to preserve the monarchical order. The revolutionary movement in Russia made the stakes equally high for Emperors Francis Joseph and William II. In a move similar to that of Tsar Nicholas in 1849, the two emperors would be acting in accordance with their own interest and “with well-considered foresight of coming events” if they sent words of sympathy and friendship to the beleaguered Russian monarch.

Anticipating Gołuchowski’s counterarguments, Aehrenthal touched on some possible objections to his scheme. In the past, Emperor William’s unpredictable personality had done much to make the tsar wary of the Three Emperors’ Alliance. Within a new alliance, Austria-Hungary and Russia could restrain the German emperor. Aehrenthal wrote that Schoen had repeatedly told him that Austria-Hungary would perform a great service by assuming the role of mediator between Berlin and St. Petersburg. This involved another tendentious interpretation of Schoen’s remarks. As Aehrenthal well knew, for German statesmen, the road to St. Petersburg had to run through Berlin, and not Vienna. Aehrenthal also rejected the idea that an alliance of the three emperors would tie Austria-Hungary’s hands in the Balkan Peninsula. As long as

219 HHStA, NS/1, Aehrenthal to Schiessl, St. Petersburg, 21 January 1900. Schiessl had just been appointed director of Emperor Francis Joseph’s civil cabinet. Before that, he was Austro-Hungarian minister in Belgrade.

220 Ibid., PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/1, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., No. 2 secret, St. Petersburg, 25 July 1906 (Wank, 1: No. 300). All quotations are from this document. The emphasis is in the original.

the tsar preserved monarchical authority, Russia will be unlikely to embark on an active foreign policy, and all of the present agreements would remain in force with regard to Turkey. In the event of the historically necessary collapse of Turkish authority in Europe, which "we have absolutely no interest in preventing ... but in exploiting," Austria-Hungary's interests in the Balkans would not suffer from "a closer relationship with the Russian imperial court." This held true in the first place for guaranteeing the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Aehrenthal concluded by once again summing up his plan: the three sovereigns, who represented the "foundation stones" of the monarchical order in Europe, would lend each other moral support in difficult times by a friendly exchange of messages, which would serve to strengthen the resolve of Tsar Nicholas. Only later, Aehrenthal wrote, would the possibility be examined of giving the demonstration of moral solidarity "a practical expression in an alliance (*Bündnisvertrag*)."²²¹ He requested a response from Gółuchowski on the acceptability of his plan.

Having still not heard from Gółuchowski by the end of August, Aehrenthal wrote again.²²² Stressing that he had taken care to explain to Schoen the informal and unofficial nature of his discussion with him, Aehrenthal informed Gółuchowski that after his discussion with Schoen, the German ambassador had written to Berlin along the lines of his (Aehrenthal's) letters of 20 and 25 July. Aehrenthal's conversation with Schoen was a probe to discover Berlin's attitude toward the project. By this direct method, which probably displeased Gółuchowski, Aehrenthal learned of Berlin's response from Schoen before he received Gółuchowski's reply to both of his letters. According to Aehrenthal, the German chancellor, Bülow, greeted the idea of the revival of the Three Emperors' Alliance with great sympathy, since it would ease Germany's position in Europe. He announced his readiness to enter into the scheme, but only if the desire for the restoration of the Three Emperors' Alliance came from Russia. Bülow recommended that Austria-Hungary "sound out the terrain on the Neva" and in case of favorable results take the initiative, revealing by that his own desire to avoid any interference in Russian internal affairs. In fact, Bülow concurred with Schoen's skepticism, and in light of the failure of the Björkö

²²¹ At the end of July, Aehrenthal remarked to Mérey that what appeared to him as most desirable "is moral support and encouragement [of Tsar Nicholas] by Emperor Francis Joseph and Emperor William. If Emperor Nicholas, who on the whole is holding up quite well, remains firm, the Russian revolution will be a thing of the past. That is ... the essential point for us. Everything else would be *cura posterior*." HHStA, NM/1, St. Petersburg, 30 July 1906 (Wank, 1: No. 301).

²²² HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXII/1, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl., secret, St. Petersburg, 23 August 1906 (Wank, 1: No. 303).

treaty, the chancellor considered it doubtful that Russia would be prepared to conclude an alliance. Bülow, in effect, rejected Aehrenthal's plan.²²³

Aehrenthal, for his part, sought to increase its attractiveness to Gółuchowski by pointing out its diplomatic utility. In keeping with the idea that the Three Emperors' Alliance would serve to restrain Germany, Aehrenthal suggested that it would accord with the spirit of his plan if the three imperial powers adopted a common policy at the second Hague peace conference called at the invitation of the tsar for 1907. This was especially important with regard to the disarmament question. Emperor William II was taking an overtly hostile attitude toward the question of arms limitations, which was what disarmament really meant. Dogged German opposition on that question and on that of compulsory arbitration would lead to a serious diplomatic defeat for Germany and the intensification of international tensions. A common policy in the disarmament question would make Germany appear less bellicose, and would be a step towards the conclusion of a more formal alliance of the three imperial powers.²²⁴

In order to improve the chances of success for his plan, Aehrenthal sought to enlist the aid of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, a warm supporter of closer Austro-Russian relations who was especially attracted to the idea of the resurrection of the Three Emperors' Alliance. At the end of August, Aehrenthal wrote to the archduke, painting a bleak picture of the political situation in Russia and the weakness of the tsar.²²⁵ To bolster his argument that extreme measures were required to preserve the position of the tsar, Aehrenthal enclosed a memorandum by his friend Schwanebach. In it, the arch-conservative former Russian official acknowledged that some form of representative system was necessary, but a sound one could not be established until the present socialist, anarchist, and terrorist forces — among which Schwanebach included the moderate bourgeois Constitutional Democratic Party — were defeated.²²⁶ Arch-conservative that he was, Francis Ferdinand probably agreed with Schwanebach's views, but he could do little to further Aehrenthal's project. By the summer of 1906, the heir to the throne had acquired some influence in military affairs but had almost none in the area of foreign policy.²²⁷

²²³ GP 22, No. 7358, Bülow to Schoen, Norderney, 1 August 1906.

²²⁴ Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, 23 August 1906 (same as in n. 222 above).

²²⁵ KA, MKFF, 203/1a, Aehrenthal to Francis Ferdinand, St. Petersburg, 28 August 1906 (Wank, 1: No. 304).

²²⁶ Ibid., 203/1d for a copy of Schwanebach's memorandum dated 21 July 1906 (Wank, 1: No. 304, app. 1).

²²⁷ Williamson, "Influence, Power, and the Policy Process," 418–420.

Gołuchowski finally answered Aehrenthal on 15 September.²²⁸ The foreign minister professed to have no objection to sending an expression of sympathy and friendship to Tsar Nicholas in keeping with the warm relations between the three imperial courts; and he agreed with Aehrenthal that a common policy of the three imperial powers at the Hague conference would be worthwhile to combat English influence in St. Petersburg and London's intentions of making diplomatic capital out of the disarmament question. In this regard, a manifestation of friendship for the tsar from Emperor Francis Joseph would be a suitable occasion for an exchange of views leading to eventual discussions of a common policy.

On the other hand, Gołuchowski was still skeptical about the revival of the Three Emperors' Alliance. He did not believe that Russia would renounce its alliance with France, especially with Izvolsky in office. Gołuchowski hypothesized that even if this did occur, it would mean the end of the Triple Alliance, since England and France would succeed in persuading Italy to renounce the unpopular treaty with Austria-Hungary. As it existed, the Triple Alliance secured the monarchy against an attack on its southern frontier, which would be inevitable if Italy left the alliance (as foreign minister, Aehrenthal eventually came to hold similar diplomatic views). Beyond endangering the alliance with Italy, a policy of close association with Russia at that time would find no support among the political parties in Austria outside of clerical and conservative circles and a minority of Czechs who might be swayed by ethnic considerations. The Hungarians would strongly oppose an exchange of the alliance with Italy for one with Russia.

Quite apart from international relations and domestic opposition, Gołuchowski raised the question whether internal conditions in Russia made a closer relationship advisable. He answered the question with a caustic assessment of the situation in Russia. Perhaps the bitterness of his description reflected his animosity, as a Pole, toward the Russian government. In Gołuchowski's opinion, the situation in Russia was even worse than it appeared. The "rottenness is so profound" that regeneration from the ground up was necessary. It was less a matter of Tsar Nicholas's lacking the will to do that than it was of his having men to carry out his intentions. The corrupt bureaucracy was completely incapable and cared only about perpetuating its own power. Ruthless repression could bring about a momentary armistice, but if significant reforms were not made, then "the revolutionary movement...will break out with even more elemental force." There was no telling how long the

²²⁸ HHStA, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/1, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl. secret, Vienna, 15 September 1906 (Wank, 1: No. 306). Also printed in Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 309-312. All quotations are from this document.

crisis would last and whether the Romanov dynasty would survive the revolutionary attack. Under those conditions, Gołuchowski believed that it was premature to consider an alliance with such a decrepit power. Ironically, Aehrenthal had similarly described official ineptness and inadequate reforms in his reports from Russia in the 1880s, when his judgment had not been clouded by political anxiety.

Gołuchowski reminded Aehrenthal that in his reports of the last year he had repeatedly called attention to the prominent role of the “international revolutionary party” in the Russian revolutionary movement. The restoration of the Three Emperors’ Alliance would be regarded as a reactionary alliance to bolster tsarist autocracy. Such a policy on the part of Austria-Hungary and Germany “would unleash a veritable storm of all radical and revolutionary elements against them.” Germany, with a stronger structure, might be able “to survive such an assault.” The major target for all radical and revolutionary elements, however, certainly would be the monarchy, and at a time when the introduction of universal male suffrage in Austria and stronger separatist tendencies in Hungary made the future uncertain. Under those conditions, would it be wise, Gołuchowski asked, for Austria-Hungary “to draw the assault of the revolution from Russia onto ourselves?”

Again, as in their earlier exchanges, Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski did not differ on the fundamental facts of the situation but in their responses to them. Both realized the seriousness of the Russian revolution and its effects on the centrifugal pressures in Austria-Hungary. Aehrenthal saw in a revival of the Three Emperors’ Alliance a way of combating the revolution and saving Russia, and thereby Austria-Hungary, from disintegration. Gołuchowski came to the opposite conclusion. The way to save the Habsburg Monarchy from disintegration was by not getting too close to Russia precisely because she was weak and unstable. For Aehrenthal, a not-too-healthy monarchy could be maintained only by a joint effort of the three imperial powers against the revolutionary disease in Russia; Gołuchowski believed that isolating the susceptible Habsburg Monarchy from seriously infected Russia was the best way of preventing further deterioration in its health.

In the end, Aehrenthal’s grand scheme came to nothing. He held on to the idea of the Three Emperors’ Alliance for a brief period after he became foreign minister. He did get Emperor Francis Joseph to write a letter of encouragement to Tsar Nicholas,²²⁹ and he had some success in getting the three imperial powers to adopt a common policy in the disarmament question at the second

²²⁹ Aehrenthal delivered the letter during his departure audience with the tsar at the beginning of November 1906. The letter and the tsar’s reply are printed in Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal*, 104 and 108, respectively.

Hague peace conference.²³⁰ He soon realized, however, that under the existing circumstances, the idea of reviving the Three Emperors' Alliance was a virtual impossibility.²³¹ The tsarist government had defeated the revolutionary movement without the aid of the alliance and was moving closer to England. In any event, the fact that the revolution had been defeated in Russia and the political situation in the Habsburg Monarchy had improved slightly lessened Aehrenthal's political anxiety and his need for the Three Emperors' Alliance.

The Other Powers

No matter how preoccupied with policy toward Russia, Aehrenthal had to acknowledge the existence of the other powers. It is worthwhile, therefore, to sketch Aehrenthal's views of the other powers before he became foreign minister. As Austria-Hungary's ally since 1879, Germany was of course a key factor in Habsburg foreign relations. As a young diplomat, Aehrenthal formed a distinctly negative impression of Germany based on his frequent stopovers in Berlin on his trips to and from St. Petersburg. In 1882, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother, "The more I come here, the less I like this city; everything is so formal — streets, people, and very little life."²³² Nor did Aehrenthal have a high regard for Emperor William II, whose "precipitous character and... garrulousness are decidedly unsympathetic to me," as he wrote to his father in 1890.²³³ He worried about "this certainly very talented ruler, who, however, wants to play a role *à tout prix* and at every hour of the day and night."²³⁴ At times he was inclined to agree with those Russian officials who regarded Em-

²³⁰ Wank, "Diplomacy against the Peace Movement," 62–66.

²³¹ See Aehrenthal's summary of his discussions with Bülow in Berlin on 14 and 15 November 1906, HHStA, PA I/483, Fascicle XXXVII/a, and Bülow's summary of the same conversation in GP 22, No. 7369.

²³² SAL, RAA/122, Aehrenthal to his mother, Berlin, 29 January 1882 (Adlgasser, 1: 238 n. 418). Aehrenthal's description reflects the difference between the more "easygoing" Austrians and the "sterner" Prussians perceived by Austrian writers such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal. See the latter's "Preusse und Österreicher: Ein Schema," *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 3: *Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin, 1924), 61–62.

²³³ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 31 March 1890 (Adlgasser, 1: 448–449). Some German diplomats also saw the emperor that way. Referring to a meeting between Emperor William and Tsar Nicholas in 1912, Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter, the German foreign secretary, wrote, "I am anxious about the suddenness of the emperor." *Kiderlen-Wächter, der Staatsmann und Mensch: Briefwechsel und Nachlass*, Ernst Jäckh, ed., 2 vols. (Berlin, 1924), 1:151.

²³⁴ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 31 January 1901 (Adlgasser, 1: 775 n. 1600).

peror William as somewhat "abnormal."²³⁵ In that context, Aehrenthal found disquieting the thought that "the great questions of war and peace will depend on Germany's further development."²³⁶

Early on in his diplomatic career, Aehrenthal came to the conclusion that Austria-Hungary suffered too much from being caught in the backwash of German diplomatic blunders and the antagonism aroused by German power. Austro-Hungarian and German interests did not always coincide and sometimes conflicted, and he resented what he saw as Vienna's unnecessary self-effacement in its relations with its powerful ally.²³⁷ He suspected Germany, correctly as it turned out, of working for a separate agreement with Russia.²³⁸ On the other hand, Russian antagonism to Germany was an obstacle to an Austro-Russian understanding; such an understanding was, in turn, as Aehrenthal observed, "the nightmare which haunts...the ghosts of the Wilhelmstrasse."²³⁹ Curiously, Aehrenthal, who sought a bilateral security arrangement with Russia, decried Germany's own efforts in that regard and was blind to German fears of its ally acting behind its back.

Aehrenthal was not the only Habsburg diplomat who resented the treatment Austria-Hungary received at Germany's hands. Even the less passionate Gołuchowski, for whom the alliance with Germany was the bedrock of his policy, could express himself bitterly on the subject. In a letter to Szögyény in 1902, he wrote,

Altogether, the ways that German policy has been going of late indeed gives great cause for concern. The ever-increasing arrogance, the desire to play the schoolmaster everywhere, the lack of consideration with which Berlin often proceeds, are things which create a highly uncomfortable atmosphere in the field of foreign affairs, and cannot but have harmful repercussions on our relationship with Germany in the long run.²⁴⁰

235 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 4 March 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 491–492; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 99). In the same letter, Aehrenthal admitted to having admired Emperor William for a time. On contemporary Austrian views of Emperor William II, see Fritz Fellner, "Wilhelm II. und das wilhelminische Deutschland im Urteil österreichischer Zeitgenossen," in John C. G. Röhl, ed., *Der Ort Kaiser Wilhelms II. in der deutschen Geschichte*. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien vol. 17 (Munich, 1991), 79–89.

236 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, St. Petersburg, 26 March 1892 (Adlgasser, 1: 492–493; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 101).

237 HHStA, PA X/99, Aehrenthal to Kálnoky, Pvl. 1, St. Petersburg, 1 January 1892.

238 Ibid., NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Bucharest 17 July 1896; *ibid.*, PA X/114, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 60E, St. Petersburg, 7 September 1900.

239 Ibid., NMe, Aehrenthal to Mensdorff, St. Petersburg, 3 April 1902 (Wank, 1: No. 200).

240 Ibid., PA I/480, fascicle XXXIV/b, Gołuchowski to Szögyény, Vienna, 17 January 1902. Printed in Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 425–429, 427 for the quotation.

Resentment ran especially high over the way Berlin pursued its commercial interests in the Balkans against its own ally. "Germany has injured us far more commercially...than Russia has injured us politically," wrote Emil Jettel von Ettenach to Aehrenthal in 1900.²⁴¹ Four years later, Jettel wrote distressingly, "the Germans are strangling us."²⁴² In a letter to Szögyény, Aehrenthal remarked that "Berlin handles us *par dessous la jambe* [without care] because it feels our powerlessness."²⁴³

German statesmen were not unaware of their ally's resentful attitude. In 1889, Emperor William II, not normally sensitive to the effects of German power, was reported to have said,

*We absolutely need the alliance. We wound ourselves when we handle Austria, [which] is terribly oversensitive with regard to its weakness compared to our strength, too energetically — when we let it feel our strength.*²⁴⁴

At the end of 1904, Count Karl Wedel, the German ambassador in Vienna, warned of the deep resentment against Germany in Austria-Hungary engendered partly by "the fear that we intend to penetrate into the Serbian domain."²⁴⁵ All such warnings apparently went unheeded. Down to Austria-Hungary's collapse, German statesmen disdainfully regarded their ally as, in Bismarck's word, a "corpse."²⁴⁶ After he became foreign minister, Aehrenthal is reported to have said, "They never like us there [Berlin]; whether things go well or badly, we are always the inferior fellows there."²⁴⁷ Perhaps no two rul-

241 HHStA, NA/1, Jettel to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 5 January 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 200).

242 Ibid., 3 December 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 259).

243 Ibid., NA/4, Aehrenthal to Szögyény, Vienna, 27 September 1901 (Wank, 1: No. 183).

244 *Philipp Eulenburgs politische Korrespondenz*, John C. G. Röhl, ed., 3 vols. *Deutsche Geschichtsquellen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 52 (Boppard am Rhein, 1976–1983), 1: 328–329. The emphasis is in the original.

245 Quoted in Horst M. Lorscheider, "The Commercial Treaty between Germany and Serbia of 1904," *Central European History* 9 (1976): 145.

246 Bismarck wrote in his posthumously published reflections, "It is vain to ally oneself with a corpse." Quoted in May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 331. In May 1914, Heinrich von Tschirschky, the German ambassador at Vienna, wrote to Gottfried von Jagow, the German secretary of state for foreign affairs, "How often I pose the question in my thoughts whether it still really pays for us to remain attached so firmly to this state [Austria-Hungary] falling apart at the seams and to keep on with the laborious task of dragging it along with us." Quoted in Fritz Klein, "Probleme des Bündnisses zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Deutschland am Vorabend des ersten Weltkrieges," in Klein, ed., *Österreich-Ungarn in der Weltpolitik 1900 bis 1918* (Berlin, 1965), 156. On the attitude of German diplomats toward Austria-Hungary see Klein (ibid., 155–162) and Wank, "The Impact of the Dual Alliance," 288–295, 305–309, and the literature cited therein.

247 Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs*, 1: 127, 18 February 1912. Koloman von Kánia, a Ballhausplatz press bureau official, reported Aehrenthal's remark to Redlich, who agreed.

ing elites bound together by alliance before 1914 liked each other less than the men in Berlin and Vienna.

Aehrenthal, for his part, was convinced of the necessity of maintaining the alliance with Germany, while acting independently where Austro-Hungarian interests were involved.²⁴⁸ Years before he became foreign minister, as the letters of Heinrich Friedjung reveal, he was suspected by the foreign office in Berlin of being opposed to the Dual and Triple Alliances.²⁴⁹ Although the charge is exaggerated, Aehrenthal's attitude in practice implied a weakening of the internal cohesion of the alliance with Germany. He did not agree with a proposal by Friedjung calling for a solidification of the alliance "toward the re-establishment of the previous situation."²⁵⁰ In addition to the above sins, Aehrenthal also was accused of possessing Slavic sympathies.²⁵¹ The source of the latter suspicion was in part Count (1900 Prince) Phillip Eulenburg, Berlin's ambassador at Vienna (1894–1902), who mistakenly regarded Aehrenthal as a supporter of the Feudal Conservative Party in Austria, which in Eulenburg's view was a capital political crime.²⁵²

In 1898, the Wilhelmstrasse had breathed a collective sigh of relief at the resignation of Prince Franz Liechtenstein as the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in St. Petersburg. Liechtenstein had incurred the displeasure of the German foreign office because he "wanted to carry on negotiations with St. Petersburg without Berlin." "The departure of Liechtenstein is no loss to us," wrote the German ambassador at St. Petersburg, Prince Hugo von Radolin, who greeted his replacement by Aehrenthal as a sign that "Vienna is now convinced ... that this method will not lead to the goal ... The definite tendency is to lay the road to St. Petersburg via Berlin."²⁵³ Radolin was soon proved mistaken. Aehrenthal was even more assiduous than Liechtenstein in his efforts

248 HHStA, PA X/116, Aehrenthal to Gółuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 24 March 1901.

249 Friedjung's letters are in *ibid.*, NA/2. See especially his letter to Aehrenthal of 23 January 1902 (Wank, 1: No. 190) and the enclosed articles from German newspapers accusing Aehrenthal of anti-German activity in St. Petersburg. See also Friedjung's report of his discussions with Bülow (21 April 1900; Wank, 1: No. 163) and the German ambassador at Vienna, Eulenburg (27 February 1902; Wank, 1: No. 196). In both cases, Friedjung countered charges that Aehrenthal was an opponent of the Dual and Triple Alliances, sympathized with anti-German circles in Russia, or supported the Slavs against the Germans in Austria.

250 *Ibid.*, NA/2, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 1 January 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 139).

251 *Ibid.*, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 21 April 1900 and 23 January 1902 (Wank, 1: Nos. 163 and 190).

252 *Ibid.*, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 27 February 1902 (Wank, 1: No. 196). See also chapter 6 below.

253 Radolin to Friedrich von Holstein, St. Petersburg, 30 June 1900. Printed in Norman Rich and M. H. Fisher, eds., *The Holstein Papers*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1955–1963), 4: 137.

to orient Austro-Hungarian foreign policy toward Russia. The thought that Aehrenthal might succeed Góhuchowski as foreign minister was even more discomfiting, and a number of attacks on Aehrenthal in the German press, criticizing his activities in Russia as contrary to the Austro-German alliance, were probably officially inspired. In declining Friedjung's offer to write a reply to one of these attacks in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Munich), Aehrenthal remarked that Bülow had allowed these attacks on him because "he seems to believe that I am not a completely incompetent Austrian ambassador in Petersburg and could bring Austro-Russian relations into calm waters!"²⁵⁴ Long before Góhuchowski's resignation, a well-informed German newspaper editor told Heinrich Friedjung, "The *mot d'ordre* in the German foreign office is, for Germany, Szögyény would be welcome as Góhuchowski's successor; Your Excellency [Aehrenthal] would rather lean towards Russia."²⁵⁵ Indeed, German distrust of Aehrenthal was so great that one German diplomat believed that Germany "could one day come to see the appointment of Aehrenthal as a hostile act."²⁵⁶

Next to Russia and Germany, Italy was the most important power for the Ballhausplatz. At the turn of the century, Aehrenthal's attitude toward Austria-Hungary's southern ally — the "allied enemy" — was, like that of most Austro-Hungarian diplomats, unfriendly, and determined mainly by political considerations: Italian irredentism and imperialist competition in Albania. Having long been convinced of the slight value of the alliance with Italy, Aehrenthal wrote to Góhuchowski that "it is a striking fact that Italy has renewed its irredentist activity in our border territories with new energy and that it intends further to establish itself firmly in the Balkans."²⁵⁷ Aehrenthal was concerned more about the latter.

In keeping with his aim of Austro-Hungarian hegemony in the western Balkans, Aehrenthal maintained that Albania had to fall under Vienna's influence as a natural continuation of the policy inaugurated by Andrassy in 1878 to protect Dalmatia and to strengthen Austria-Hungary's position in the

254 HHStA, NF/5, Aehrenthal to Friedjung, St. Petersburg, 1 February 1902 (Wank, 1: No. 192). A copy of the newspaper article dated 11 January 1902 (*Morgenblatt*) is enclosed in Friedjung's letter of 23 January to Aehrenthal (see n. 249 above). Friedjung also thought that the press attacks were inspired by Bülow (*ibid.*).

255 *Ibid.*, NA/2, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 21 April 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 163). The editor was Hugo Jacobi of the *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten*.

256 *Ibid.*, NSz/6, Count Karl von Pückler to Count Friedrich von Szápáry. The letter, sent from St. Petersburg, was a reply to a letter from Szápáry in 1901. Pückler was secretary of the German embassy in St. Petersburg in 1900–1901.

257 *Ibid.*, PA I/475, Fascicle XXXII/k, Aehrenthal to Góhuchowski, Pvl., secret, St. Petersburg, 24 March 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 242).

Adriatic Sea. The monarchy had to oppose any other power that sought to acquire a foothold there. While Serbia and Montenegro came into consideration, Italy was Austria-Hungary's chief rival in this area.²⁵⁸ Aehrenthal fully backed Góuchowski's resistance to Italy's attempt to play an active role in the Balkans. The recognition of Italy as a Balkan power would have threatened Austria-Hungary's sphere of influence in the western Balkans and made an exclusive Austro-Russian settlement of the Balkan questions impossible. Aehrenthal contended that the attempt to reach a Balkan understanding with Russia "is based on the preliminary condition that we preserve a free hand in other directions."²⁵⁹

A general unwillingness to permit Italy an equal voice (*Mitspracherecht*) in Balkan affairs caused Góuchowski to overlook the advantageous implications for Austria-Hungary of Italy's proposal in 1902 to broaden Articles Six and Seven of the Triple Alliance treaty of 1891.²⁶⁰ Those articles committed the three alliance partners to use their influence to maintain the status quo in the Orient and bound Austria-Hungary and Italy to the principle of reciprocal compensation should either one find it necessary to modify the territorial status quo "in the regions of the Balkans or of the Ottoman coasts and islands in the Adriatic and in the Aegean Sea."²⁶¹ Despite these assurances, the Italian government did not see them as definitively securing an equal voice in the Balkans and more broadly the Eastern Question. It feared, not without justification, that Austria-Hungary and Russia could reach an understanding on a new Balkan order to the exclusion of Italy. Further, it was concerned that a solution of the Straits Question allowing Russian warships to enter into the Mediterranean Sea would reduce Italy "to a second-rate power wedged between France and Russia."²⁶² Giulio Prinetti, the Italian foreign minister sought to prevent these threats to Italy's position as an independent power factor by revising Articles Six and Seven to bind Germany "more extensively to the support of the status quo in the Balkans than she had hitherto been," and by including a pledge by all three powers "to oppose any attempt of an-

258 Ibid., NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Bucharest, 9 January 1897.

259 Ibid., PA X/122, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, T. 47, St. Petersburg, 9 March 1904. In an earlier report, Aehrenthal expressed his concern at the increasing Italian intervention in Balkan affairs, which he attributed to Montenegrin influence, the Italian king having married a Montenegrin princess. Ibid., PA XIV (Albanien)/27, Fascicle XIX, R. 3B, Aehrenthal to Góuchowski, St. Petersburg, 16 January 1902.

260 See Fellner, "Der Dreibund," in Fellner, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund*, 50–62. See also Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 119–127.

261 For the full texts of the articles, see Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 1: 155.

262 Ibid., 2: 121. See also Fellner, "Der Dreibund," in Fellner, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund*, 54–55.

other great power to change the territorial status quo in the Orient."²⁶³ The revisions proposed by Prinetti would have given Italy the equal voice it desired, but at the same time, they would have made an "action slave" in the Balkans or against Constantinople and the Straits impossible.²⁶⁴

Goluchowski "categorically" rejected Prinetti's proposals for reasons alluded to above.²⁶⁵ Fritz Fellner maintains that the rejection was a mistake. From the standpoint of conservative status quo policy in the Balkans, and concern over the future of Constantinople, Goluchowski may be criticized for passing too lightly over an opportunity to obtain security in relation to both of these strategic points.²⁶⁶ Even more, Prinetti's proposals "would have rendered the Russian-Serbian aggression against Turkey in the Balkan essentially more difficult."²⁶⁷ While agreeing with Goluchowski in 1902, by 1907 Aehrenthal had changed his views of Austro-Italian relations.²⁶⁸

Aehrenthal's attitude toward England and France was rooted partly in a distaste for their liberal constitutional political systems. It was determined, however, far more by their relationship to his primary diplomatic objective of an Austro-Russian agreement. As we have already seen, in the 1890s, Aehrenthal advocated cutting the connection with England as a preliminary to moving closer to Russia. In the years after 1900, Aehrenthal observed English efforts at rapprochement with Russia, spurred on by the growing Anglo-German antagonism.²⁶⁹ He told Heinrich Friedjung that personally, Tsar Nicholas was more inclined to Germany than to England, but public opinion in Russia was hostile to Germany. "Germany has rattled the saber too much [and] that has angered Europe."²⁷⁰ Aehrenthal saw English efforts as a potential threat to closer Austro-Russian relations. He was convinced that Great Britain was dangling the possibility of London's support of the Russian interpretation of the straits convention as bait for an understanding between London and St Petersburg.²⁷¹ At the turn of the century, however, he was still optimistic

²⁶³ Pribram, *The Secret Treaties*, 121-122. See also Fellner, "Der Dreibund," in Fellner, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund*, 54-55.

²⁶⁴ Fellner, "Der Dreibund," in Fellner, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund*, 55.

²⁶⁵ The word in quotation marks is from *ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ See chapter 9 in volume two of this biography (in preparation).

²⁶⁹ HHStA, PA X/115, Aehrenthal to Goluchowski, R. 9A confidential, St. Petersburg, 6 February 1901; *ibid.*, 116, Aehrenthal to Goluchowski, R. 47C confidential, 30 August 1902. On Austro-English relations before 1906 see Pribram, *Austria-Hungary and Great Britain*, 1-57.

²⁷⁰ Stb/HS, NF/2, Aufzeichnungen Aehrenthal, April-May 1906 (Friedjung, 2: 34).

²⁷¹ HHStA, PA X/116, Aehrenthal to Goluchowski, R. 1C, St. Petersburg, 2 January 1902; *ibid.*, 126, Aehrenthal to Goluchowski, R. 59B, St. Petersburg, 21 October 1905. See also the report

about the impossibility of such an agreement. He based his views on the mutual political antipathy of important groups in both countries, particularly the pro-Boer attitude of the tsar and his court, Russian anger at the Anglo-Japanese treaty, and a belief that England would never pay the Russian price for an understanding.²⁷²

Anglo-Russian relations began to change after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war. During the war, England exhibited a markedly conciliatory attitude, strove to avoid friction with Russia, and followed a policy of neutrality. Whatever friction arose during the war was quickly allayed afterwards, and Aehrenthal had to revise his position and work to offset stepped-up British overtures to Russia.²⁷³ By 1906, Aehrenthal knew that an Anglo-Russian agreement concerning Persia was being discussed.²⁷⁴ He concluded that Russia was on the verge of deciding whether to join the Western Powers or to attach itself to the Central Powers. An Anglo-Russian entente would make an Austro-Russian understanding more difficult to obtain and hasten Russia's return to a more active Balkan policy.²⁷⁵ Faced with these unpleasant facts as foreign minister, Aehrenthal tried at first to prevent the agreement. When, despite his efforts, Anglo-Russian relations improved, Aehrenthal decided to cultivate better relations with England.²⁷⁶ That task was made difficult by the English view that Austria-Hungary was a cat's-paw for German policy. That view was stated bluntly at the end of 1905 in a letter by the newly appointed English ambassador at Vienna, Sir Edward Goschen, to the foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey: "As regards the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary it is scarcely too much to say that she is well under the thumb of Germany."²⁷⁷

The Franco-Russian alliance was equally distasteful to Aehrenthal, and he had no doubt that as a result of the treaty, the French "would exert a determining influence on high politics."²⁷⁸ After all, despite the aversion of the tsar and the court to republican ideas, financial necessity and uneasiness concerning German intentions had driven Russia to conclude the treaty. As mentioned

of Count Karl von Wedel, the German ambassador in Vienna, of a conversation with Aehrenthal in April 1906. GP 25/1, No. 8506, Wedel to Chancellor Bülow, Vienna, 30 April 1906.

272 HHStA, NMe, Aehrenthal to Mensdorff, St. Petersburg, 3 April 1902; *ibid.*, PA X/113, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 14A and 26B, R. 30D, St. Petersburg, 10 February and 15 April 1900; *ibid.*, 122, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, St. Petersburg, 26 May 1904.

273 *Ibid.*, PA X/122, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 34A, St. Petersburg, 14 June 1904.

274 *Ibid.*, 128, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 24E, St. Petersburg, 2 June 1906.

275 *Ibid.*, 129, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, R. 47B, St. Petersburg, 13 October 1906.

276 See chapter 9 in volume two of this biography (in preparation).

277 PRO/FO, 800/39, Grey Papers/Austria-Hungary, Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey, 13 December 1905.

278 SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Karl Schwarzenberg, Mieschitz/Měšice (near Prague), 12 November 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 202).

earlier, Aehrenthal saw the alliance as strengthened by the popularity of the French outside of court circles. After its conclusion, Aehrenthal hoped that the extreme conservative feelings of the tsar might lead to a loosening of the alliance. That was one of the reasons why he did not wish to see the tsar's influence in foreign affairs diminished and why he worked so hard to bolster Tsar Nicholas's wavering control.²⁷⁹

By 1904, Aehrenthal had come to terms with the solidity of the Franco-Russian alliance — which the failure of his 1906 plan to revive the Three Emperors' League seemed to confirm — and began to think about improving Austro-French relations. He sounded out Maurice Bompard, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg, and, in June 1905, Aehrenthal informed Kajetan von Mérey in the Ballhausplatz that Bompard had received his remarks favorably and indicated that he would try to do all that he (Bompard) could to bring about the desired improvement. According to Bompard, the terrain for such an improvement was already being prepared, thanks chiefly to the French realization that there was no substantial conflict of interest between Paris and Vienna, while the closeness of Austro-Russian relations was another reason for seeking improvement.²⁸⁰

The French ambassador placed the blame for Austria-Hungary's bad press in France on the great number of the monarchy's citizens in the country — probably a reference to anti-Habsburg Czechs, Poles, and other Slavic nationalists — whose influence was not effectively counteracted by the Austro-Hungarian embassy. By writing to Mérey, Aehrenthal obviously intended that serious consideration be given concerning “whether and how to answer this friendly attitude, or rather mood.”²⁸¹ Of course, he did not discount the possibility that Bompard's receptiveness was a French ploy to weaken Austro-German ties, which would hardly be in Austria-Hungary's interest at a time of revolution in Russia and instability at home:

At the present time it is most important to be on a good footing with the *grand et fort garçon allemand*. This is an especially bad time for experiments.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ See 208, 211 above.

²⁸⁰ HHStA, NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Tsarskoe Selo, 22 June 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 275).

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* Mérey and the Ballhausplatz press bureau chief, Emil Jettel von Ettenach, did not hold out much hope for a friendlier tone on the part of French newspapers toward the monarchy: “The number of ... papers is too great and the quality with few exceptions ... miserable.” In addition, the papers were easily accessible to anti-Habsburg journalists. Neither the French government nor the Austro-Hungarian embassy, Mérey thought, could do very much to remedy the situation, “because the hydra that must be slain has too many heads.” HHStA, NA/3, Mérey to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 15 July 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 278).

²⁸² Aehrenthal to Mérey, 22 June 1905 (same as in n. 280 above).

Even so he felt that the unpropitious times should not act as a deterrent to continuing the contact, since “favorable dispositions of the French press and government can only be good for us. This would make our task easier and make us more independent.”²⁸³ As foreign minister, Aehrenthal would not be content “to travel on a beaten path.”²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ The quoted words are from Aehrenthal's letter to Baron Karl von Macchio, at that time secretary of the embassy in Constantinople. See 174 above.

IN THE MAELSTROM OF DOMESTIC POLITICS, 1897-1906

In February 1899, Joseph Maria Baernreither noted in his diary that Aehrenthal "comprehends, and rightly so, the whole situation from the standpoint of the external position of the monarchy, which is deeply compromised by the internal events in Austria."¹ The "rapid consolidation" of the domestic situation in Austria-Hungary, which Aehrenthal, in his September 1895 memorandum, had "confidently hoped" would take place soon,² had not only failed to materialize, but the situation had become worse. Even Aehrenthal had to admit in 1896 that the "*internal disorderliness*" made it difficult for Gólurowski to construct a good foreign policy.³ "The main emphasis," Aehrenthal wrote Mérey, "must be placed on the internal development."⁴ Two years later, he cautioned Gólurowski, who did not need any warning, that the existing internal dissension "compels us to adopt a very cautious tempo" in the implementation of the program of territorial expansion in the Balkan peninsula outlined in his December 1898 memorandum.⁵

Aehrenthal's reference to unstable domestic conditions in his 1898 memorandum was more than a mere general observation on the fragility of the Dual Monarchy's political structure. It reflects the severe political crisis that erupted in Austria after Count Kasimir Badeni, the prime minister, issued his famous language ordinances for Bohemia and Moravia in April 1897. The crisis, which lasted two years, contributed greatly to the Habsburg Monarchy's internal paralysis and fueled Aehrenthal's political anxiety and motivated his direct involvement in internal politics for the next several years. If the monarchy were to be restored to its old position as an effective great power, which was the external requirement for maintaining the traditional dynastic-imperial state, the paralyzing internal constraints on its participation in the international power system had to be removed.

The First Phase of the Language Crisis, 1897-1898

The language ordinances promulgated as administrative regulations by Count Badeni placed Czech and German on an equal footing in the inner as well as

1 Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 95-96.

2 See 170 above.

3 HHStA, NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Bucharest, 26 February 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 162). The emphasis is in the original.

4 Ibid.

5 See 181-185 above.

the outer service of jurisdiction and administration in Bohemia and Moravia; henceforth, not only would state authorities in the two provinces have to deal with petitioners in their native language, but all communications between public officials in the provinces would have to take place in the language of the petition; and the decrees stipulated that all officials would have to demonstrate their fluency in Czech and German by the year 1901.⁶ The German-Austrians offered violent resistance to the decrees and through parliamentary obstruction by their political parties brought Austria closer to political chaos than at any time since 1848. In and out of parliament, the German-Austrians, who saw the language ordinances as a threat to their sociopolitical and economic predominance, demanded that they be rescinded. At the very least, the Germans urged the division of Bohemia along ethnic-linguistic lines, a move that they had opposed as long as they had the upper hand politically. Paradoxically, the obstructionist tactics of the German parties prevented parliamentary approval of the new *Ausgleich* (compromise) laws with Hungary, whose passage Badeni had intended to ensure by winning the support of the Young Czechs through granting language concessions. The “furor teutonicus” in the parliament and the streets drove Badeni from office on 28 November 1897.⁷

The internal turmoil did not end with Badeni's resignation, but continued for two years and aroused profound uneasiness over the future of the Habsburg Monarchy abroad as well as at home. In the spring of 1899, French and Russian statesmen began to discuss the eventuality of the breakup of Austria-Hungary.⁸ Political despair and anxiety over the disintegration of the Dual Monarchy ran very deep within the Habsburg political and social elite. Austria-Hungary faced a crisis “which threatens to surpass all internal complications that we have experienced in the last forty years,” wrote Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal in June 1897.⁹ Ladislaus von Hengelmüller, Austro-Hungarian

6 The standard work on the Badeni language ordinances and the ensuing crisis is Berthold Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen von 1897: Ihre Genesis und ihre Auswirkungen vornehmlich auf die innerösterreichischen Alpenländer*, 2 vols. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs, vols. 46–47 (Graz–Cologne, 1960–1965). The ordinances applied to all of the offices and officials of the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Finance, Commerce, and Agriculture, and they applied to the officials at the provincial and county level, and to the judicial and state prosecuting authorities in Bohemia and Moravia. The texts of the ordinances are printed in *ibid.*, 1: 274–276.

7 For a vivid account of the near-revolutionary turmoil see Whiteside, *The Socialism of Fools*, 160–188. See also Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, 2: 11–230. On Badeni's strategy to win the support of the Czechs, see *ibid.*, 2: 136. On the connection between language and sociopolitical predominance see Burian, “The State Language Problem in Old Austria,” 99–102.

8 Walters, “Franco-Russian Discussions.”

9 HHStA, NA/1, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 30 June 1897 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 267).

envoy in Washington, thought that “the monarchy will surely not collapse... but its present constitution seems to be called into question.”¹⁰ That the constitution was indeed called into question is attested by plans for a *coup d'état* (*Staatsstreichpläne*) and ideas of ending domestic difficulties by drastic applications of royal power that circulated in Constitutionally Loyal and Feudal Conservative circles in 1898–1899 and that constitute an undercurrent in Aehrenthal's correspondence in those years. Nothing came of those plans, because every attempt to actualize them led to complications, which the abstract and obsolete principles underlying them could not resolve.¹¹ The pessimism was especially strong among Aehrenthal's friends and relatives in Bohemia. Even before the Badeni language ordinances were issued, Prince Karl Schwarzenberg, the noted Feudal Conservative leader, confessed to Aehrenthal in 1896 that he had little faith that a solution to the Czech-German nationality conflict would ever be achieved.¹² The near-revolutionary situation created by the resistance to Badeni's language ordinances only served to deepen the pessimism of the aristocrats. In April 1898, Count Oswald Thun-Salm, a leading member of the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners, wrote to Aehrenthal, “It is easy for you to be an optimist [living abroad] ... I have belonged to the pessimists for quite some time.”¹³ Another expression of pessimism at the same time came from the Feudal Conservative Count Ferdinand Buquoy: “By and large our viewpoints have not altered; your optimism [becomes] firmer, my pessimism is fed again and again.”¹⁴ Although not immune to feelings of pessimism, it is still true that Aehrenthal was much more optimistic about finding a solution to the Czech-German conflict than were his father or his Bohemian friends and relatives. From the beginning, however, his efforts to resolve the Czech-German conflict were beset with the basic contradiction found in all of his thinking about the nationalities problem in Austria-Hungary. On the one hand, he argued that satisfying Slavic national aspirations within the Habsburg Monarchy was crucial to its survival.¹⁵ On the other hand, the preservation of the Habsburg Monarchy as a great power, which was equally crucial to the monarchy's survival, required the predominance of the Germans and Magyars in Austria and Hungary respectively, along with the

10 Ibid., Hengelmüller to Aehrenthal, Washington, 22 February 1898 (Wank, 1: No. 100). Hengelmüller, since 1906 Baron, was Austro-Hungarian minister (after 1902 ambassador) to the United States from 1894 until 1913.

11 See 235–237, 243–244 below.

12 HHStA, NA/3, Schwarzenberg to Aehrenthal, Schloss Worlik/Orlik (Southern Bohemia), 24 November 1896 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 206).

13 Ibid., 4, Thun-Salm to Aehrenthal, Beaulieu, France, 6 April 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 384).

14 Ibid., 1, Buquoy to Aehrenthal, Schloss Hauenstein, 16 April 1898 (Wank, 1: No. 100).

15 See 88–89 above.

continuation of the existing centralized political structures of the two states, which bolstered their predominance.¹⁶

Aehrenthal's first response to the Badeni ordinances reflected his general conciliatory attitude towards concessions to the nationalities as a way of preventing their attraction to ethnic centers beyond the monarchy's borders. On the day of the promulgation of the ordinances, Aehrenthal wrote to his father, "I would have no objections to the language regulations, for they consecrate Utraquism in Bohemia, which is absolutely fair, necessary and accords with the tradition of the land."¹⁷ The language ordinances, Aehrenthal maintained, did not destroy the German character of Austria. That could happen only by the creation of an exclusively German or Czech language region, which the Constitutionally Loyal Landowners should strive to prevent.¹⁸ As German obstructionism in the parliament mounted, Aehrenthal came to believe that the ground for the language ordinances had not been well prepared. Nevertheless, he condemned "the disgraceful scenes" in the *Reichsrat* (parliament) and "the outrageous opposition" of the German-Austrian *Fortschrittspartei* (Progressive Party) to the language ordinances.¹⁹ He warned his father against being taken in tow by pan-German and anti-Semitic agitators, who were leading the German-Austrians to a revolution against the emperor. Whatever the mistakes of the Badeni cabinet, "a good Austrian may not follow on this [revolutionary] path."²⁰ Throughout the summer and fall of 1897, Aehrenthal tried to impress upon his father that the Germans of Bohemia and Austria had to adapt themselves to changed times. He urged that they adopt a moderate and compromising course, and give up their parliamentary obstruction against al-

16 See 92–93 above.

17 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 6 April 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 646–647; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 229). Utraquism originally connoted the heretical Hussite practice, introduced in Bohemia in the early fifteenth century, of delivering communion *sub utraque specie*, i.e., in both kinds (bread and wine). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Utraquism denoted the acknowledgement of the binational and bilingual character of the country. After 1871, Utraquism, in the sense of speaking both languages and their use in common institutions, without feeling the need to choose between a specific Czech or German national identity, came under attack by German and Czech nationalists as traitorous to their respective national movements. For a perceptive case study of the interplay of German, Czech, and Utraquist political currents see Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton, 2002), 62–79, 80–87, 96–101. See also Glassheim, "Between Empire and Nation," 85–86. On the earlier history of Utraquism, see Jean Bérenger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1273–1700* (London, 1994), 67–72.

18 Aehrenthal to his father, 6 April 1897 (same as in n. 17 above).

19 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 12 May 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 649; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 243).

20 Ibid., Siniai, 12 September 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 654–655; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 299).

lowing approval of the new compromise with Hungary. He warned his father that Badeni's forced resignation would not settle the crisis.²¹

The efforts of Baron Paul Gautsch von Franckenthurn, Badeni's successor, to bring about a compromise on the language question failed. In an effort to placate the Germans, he set free those German agitators imprisoned during the campaign against Badeni. This aroused the anger of the Czechs, and Czech rioters stormed German shops and homes. The Palais Aehrenthal in Prague was among those attacked, which alarmed Aehrenthal greatly.²² German students mounted counterdemonstrations, which led to Prague and its suburbs being placed under martial law. Gautsch was able to govern only with the use of extraparliamentary emergency powers provided for in Article Fourteen of the Austrian constitution.²³ In the absence of a parliament capable of enacting the new *Ausgleich* laws, these same emergency powers were used at the end of December 1897 to extend the old *Ausgleich* for one year. Writing under the influence of the attack by Czechs on the Palais, Aehrenthal angrily condemned the demonstrators: "When it comes to kicking, the Germans will learn that the Slavs could be even more uncivilized, and are in any case more numerous."²⁴ Yet it was the Germans who drew his fire:

The Germans, who should know the Czechs, should have thought about it before they began to play with the fire of nationalist passion in ruthless ways. The Germans have undermined the authority of the government and parliament, which, however, still form a guarantee for the Germans (*Deutschtum*). They [the Germans] were the ones who through street riots forced Badeni to resign. The Czech rabble has answered with bestial brutality; that was to be foreseen.²⁵

21 Ibid., Bucharest, 26 November 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 669–671; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 313).

22 Ibid., Aehrenthal to his mother, Bucharest, 3 December 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 672; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 321). See his father's description of the rioting in a letter to Aehrenthal, *ibid.*, Prague, 3 December 1897, and the subsequent correspondence, printed in Adlgasser, 2: 673–682.

23 On the Gautsch ministry see in general Alois von Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien 1861–1917*, 4 vols. (Teschen–Vienna–Leipzig, 1917–1920), 2: 132–140. See also Hugelmann, *Das Nationalitätenrecht*, 189–193, and May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, 328–330. Article 14 granted the emperor the authority to issue emergency decrees having the force of law, for which the ministry bore the responsibility. This power was to be exercised only in situations of compelling necessity when parliament was not in session. Such emergency decrees were to be submitted to the next parliament for ratification (first of all to the lower house) within four weeks of its convening.

24 Aehrenthal to his mother, 3 December 1897 (same as n. 22 above).

25 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bucharest, 4 December 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 676–677; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 322).

On 5 March 1898, the day that Gautsch resigned, he issued ordinances that revised Badeni's in two important respects that favored the Germans. One ordinance divided Bohemia into German, Czech, and mixed-language regions, while a second made linguistic qualifications of officials dependent on the requirements of specific governmental positions. Gautsch's revisions satisfied neither the Germans nor the Czechs. The Germans were dissatisfied because Gautsch's ordinances still held to the principle of the Badeni regulations that every petition had to be handled in its own language. This meant that even in pure German regions some official business would be handled in Czech. The Czechs rejected the ordinances because they were less than what the Badeni regulations stipulated and seemed a move toward partitioning Bohemia, which the Czechs opposed.²⁶

The fall of the Badeni cabinet had heightened Aehrenthal's anxiety about the precariousness of the monarchy's internal situation. A letter to his father at the beginning of December 1897 reveals his growing belief that neither parliament nor the political parties could succeed in resolving the language conflict. Only resolute action, only "the emperor's will (*kaiserliche Wille*) can decide our fate."²⁷ By the beginning of 1898, Aehrenthal became actively engaged in trying to influence Emperor Francis Joseph to adopt a resolute policy. Much to the consternation of the leaders of the Constitutionally Loyal Landowners Party and the German Progressive Party (*Fortschrittspartei*) — the successor to the old liberal Constitutional Party (*Verfassungspartei*) — Aehrenthal approved of the use of Article Fourteen to break the obstructionist tactic in the Bohemian diet and Austrian parliament, but he realized that this would not provide a permanent solution to the nationality conflict.²⁸ In memoranda and audiences with the emperor, Aehrenthal presented his ideas, to be explained later, on how to end the nationality conflict in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy. In 1898–1899, he spent ten months in Austria on leaves of absence, occasioned in part by the deaths of Kálnoky in February 1898 and his father in May of the same year.²⁹ During that time — and by correspondence when he was out of the country — he was an important behind-the-scenes figure in the political maneuverings of the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners and their liberal Bohemian–German Progressive Party allies. At the

26 The texts of Gautsch's ordinances may be found in Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, 2: 278–284.

27 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 8 December 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 680–681). The emphasis is in the original.

28 HHStA, NA/2, Heinrich Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 17 May 1899 (Wank, 1: No. 127). Friedjung discusses a letter from Aehrenthal, dated 14 May 1899, which is not among Aehrenthal's letters in the *Nachlass Friedjung*.

29 Ibid., AR, Fach 4, Personalia/5, Aehrenthal-Urlaube.

same time, he was in contact with Feudal Conservative political leaders and even with the Young Czech leader Karel Kramář. In early December 1897, Aehrenthal wrote plaintively to his father, "When will the men arise who will rescue us!"³⁰ In the fall of 1899, it was rumored that Aehrenthal himself would be the man.³¹

Aehrenthal's first major attempt to influence political developments in Austria took place in mid January 1898. On leave from 13 December 1897 to 12 January 1898, he spent his time in Prague, Vienna, and Budapest talking to prominent aristocratic and bourgeois political leaders. Three days after his return to Bucharest, he wrote a long private letter to Gołuchowski in which he set down his impressions of the political situation in Austria-Hungary and proposed a solution to the nationality conflict.³² In part, Aehrenthal's proposals resembled those of Gautsch and in part reflected the desires of the German-Austrian political leaders, the gist of which Aehrenthal probably transmitted to the emperor in an audience shortly before he left for Bucharest.³³ The letter to Gołuchowski may be seen as an indirect way of influencing the emperor and as a way of moving Gołuchowski to act like a *de facto* chancellor and guide internal policy along lines favorable to the unity of the monarchy and the preservation of its status as a Great Power. What Gołuchowski thought of the letter is not known; he probably saw it as another example of Aehrenthal's penchant for grandiose political schemes. Kajetan von Mérey, Gołuchowski's *chef de cabinet*, found the letter "very interesting" and based on a "very broad perspective." He found himself in agreement with most of Aehrenthal's recommendations but doubted that the strong government needed to carry them out could be created.³⁴

The main points of the plan that Aehrenthal presented to Gołuchowski are similar to those found in all of his memoranda and letters on the nationality conflict of the next two years. Within a centralized political structure, Austria would be divided into three national-language areas: (1) the Austrian Hereditary Lands; (2) the Bohemian-Moravian-Silesian group; and (3) Galicia. In the hereditary lands and in Galicia the respective paramount nationality — Germans and Poles — would predominate with no consideration at

30 Aehrenthal to his father, 8 December 1897 (same as n. 27 above).

31 See 252, 257–258 below.

32 HHStA, Gesandtschaftsarchiv Bukarest 1898, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., Bucharest, 15 January 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 348). See also Wank, "Zwei Dokumente Aehrenthals aus den Jahren 1898–99 zur Lösung der inneren Krise in Österreich-Ungarn," *MÖSTA* 19 (1966): 339–362.

33 SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg, Bucharest, 24 January 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 351). For Gautsch's plan see 233–234 above.

34 HHStA, NA/3, Mérey to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 1 February 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 354).

all shown to the other nationalities. The Bohemian–Moravian–Silesian group by contrast would be divided into German, Czech, and mixed-language areas, with the aims of placating the Germans by guaranteeing the preservation of the pure German character of the German parts of Bohemia. The different language areas in Bohemia would be formed by returning to the old system of districts (*Kreiseinteilung*). The national-linguistic administrative divisions would be reflected in the administrative structure in ways favoring the two million Germans against the six million Czechs. In addition to the existing electoral curiae based on social class, property and vocation, separate Czech and German national curiae would be created in the diet, with each national curia equally represented on the committees of the diet and each curia having a veto in all matters of importance for its nationality. Despite the fact that his plan favored the Germans, Aehrenthal believed that the Czechs would feel satisfied enough by the attainment of nationality rights in their own area to cooperate with the Poles and Germans in building a strong stable coalition on which the government could depend for its program.³⁵

The advantage of his plan for the internal reorganization of Austria, Aehrenthal believed, was that it would not disturb the essential unity and character of Austria, which would be based on the German nature of the Alpine lands and the use of German as the language of the central administration. To further strengthen political stability in Austria as well as its German character, Aehrenthal recommended that consideration be given to the “so-often planned” detachment of the South Slav area of Dalmatia from Austria, without saying how this was to be accomplished.³⁶ Aehrenthal’s solicitude for the German–Austrians was based on his belief, shared by many moderate German–Austrians such as Joseph Maria Baernreither, that “the interests of the Germans coincide with those of the monarchy” and the protection of those interests against Czechs and South Slavs constituted an act of self-preservation

35 Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 15 January 1898 (same as n. 32 above).

36 Ibid. Aehrenthal’s proposal regarding Dalmatia echoes the Linz Program of 1882 drawn up at the German–Austrian convention by the nationally more conscious members of the German Liberal Party. The Linz Program, proclaimed as a liberal document, stood for stronger centralization of Austria under German leadership to be brought about by the separation of the two outlying Slavic territories of Dalmatia and Galicia and the then isolated Bukovina. The separation of these territories, especially the first two, was intended to strengthen the alleged German character of the remaining lands, which included Bohemia and Moravia. For the text of the Linz Program see Klaus Berchtold, ed., *Österreichische Parteiprogramme 1868–1966* (Vienna–Munich, 1967), 198–203. See also Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 1: 97, and Alfred Dechel, “Das ‘Linzer Programm’ und seine Autoren: Seine Vorgeschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rolle des Historikers Heinrich Friedjung” (Ph.D. diss. Univ. of Salzburg, 1976). The idea of separating Dalmatia from Austria crops up again in a secret memoir by Aehrenthal in 1907 (Wank, 2: No 335).

on the part of the state.³⁷ Therefore, although Aehrenthal acknowledged at the outset of his letter that “the reintroduction of a rigid German centralism in Austria is today certainly impossible,” his plan nevertheless left a great deal of German-dominated centralism intact. He admitted as much when he stated, “In a much milder form there would come about between Austria and the Bohemian lands a *modus vivendi* similar to that which exists between Hungary and Croatia.”³⁸ In any event, after the solution of the nationalities problem in Austria along the lines urged by him, Vienna, Aehrenthal concluded, would be strengthened in its relations with Budapest and in a better position to check Hungarian separatist demands.³⁹ At the end of February 1898, Aehrenthal followed up his letter by sending Gołuchowski a copy of Kálnoky’s anti-Taaffe memorandum from the 1880s,⁴⁰ but he failed in his efforts to win the support of Prince Karl Schwarzenberg for his plan.⁴¹ The Feudal Conservative federalist and supporter of the kingdom’s autonomy in accordance with the Bohemian *Staatsrecht* (state rights) was skeptical about the Czechs agreeing to a plan that was contrary to their demand for the autonomy of the lands of the Bohemian crown. On a more fundamental level, as we have seen, Schwarzenberg believed that what Austria needed was not schemes to prop up the parliamentary system but a modernized form of absolutism that would eliminate the parliamentary form of government.⁴²

37 Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 15 January 1898 (same as n. 32 above).

38 Ibid. One year after the Compromise of 1867 between Austria and Hungary — really between the Magyar Oligarchy and Emperor Francis Joseph — the Hungarian government concluded a constitutional pact, a minicompromise called the *Nagodba*, by which Croatia was granted an autonomous position within the kingdom of Hungary. In practice, Croatian autonomy was greatly restricted by the strict centralism of the Hungarian political system and Magyar nationalism. For an English translation of the *Nagodba* see Robert W. Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Question and the Hapsburg Monarchy* (London, 1911; reprint New York, 1969), 361–379. See *ibid.*, 65–84, and Mirjana Gross, *Die Anfänge des modernen Kroatien: Gesellschaft, Politik und Kultur in Zivil-Kroatien und -Slavonien in den ersten dreissig Jahren nach 1848*. Anton Gindely-Reihe zur Geschichte der Donaumonarchie und Mitteleuropas, Gerald Stourzh, ed., vol. 1 (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 1993), 119–136 for a detailed discussion of the actual extent of Croatian autonomy under the Compromise of 1868. On Croatia’s position within the Hungarian kingdom see also Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 1: 233–241.

39 Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, 15 January 1898 (same as n. 32 above).

40 Aehrenthal mentions sending Kálnoky’s memorandum to Gołuchowski in his memorandum to the foreign minister of 31 December 1898. On that memorandum see 92–95 above.

41 Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, 24 January 1898 (same as n. 33 above).

42 HHStA, NA/3, Schwarzenberg to Aehrenthal, Prague, 3 February 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 357). See also 101–102 above.

Opposition to the Thun Government, 1898–1899

At the time that Aehrenthal wrote his letter to Schwarzenberg at the end of January, Gautsch's government was floundering, and Count Franz Thun-Hohenstein was rumored to be "the coming statesman."⁴³ On 7 March 1898, the prominent Feudal Conservative aristocrat and former Bohemian *Statthalter* (governor) was named prime minister by Emperor Francis Joseph. Although Thun-Hohenstein supported the idea of Bohemian autonomy, his support was moderate, and he opposed the more radical Young Czech nationalists.⁴⁴ Aehrenthal therefore greeted Thun's appointment with hope tinged with doubt. He wrote to his father,

My best wishes accompany him [Thun]! If he succeeds in bringing about some kind of order, then he could really be the providential man we have needed for a long time! A person must always hope, even if experience sooner would justify a great deal of skepticism.⁴⁵

Aehrenthal's hopes were strengthened by Thun's announcement of his intention to build a coalition cabinet whose chief task would be the final regulation of the language question in a legal manner, that is, through parliamentary legislation, after which parliament would be able to enact the *Ausgleich* (compromise) laws with Hungary. Thun's appointment of Joseph Maria Baernreither, a respected member of the Constitutionally Large Landowners Party, as minister of commerce and Joseph Kaizl, the Young Czech politician, as minister of finance seemed clear evidence of the new prime minister's intention to reconcile the Czechs and Germans.⁴⁶ Aehrenthal wrote to Thun that "the rapid formation of the cabinet has awakened in me hope again for a satisfactory settlement of the crisis."⁴⁷ Near the end of April 1898, Thun opened negotiations with the Czechs and Germans on the regulation of the language problem. Buoyed up by Franz Thun's seeming "to have struck out on the right path,"⁴⁸ Aehrenthal wrote to several of his friends, some of whom were mistrustful of Thun's pro-Slavic leanings, urging them to respond positively to

⁴³ Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, 24 January 1898 (same as n. 33 above).

⁴⁴ Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 245.

⁴⁵ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 8 March 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 694–695; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 369).

⁴⁶ On Thun's ministry see Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien*, 2: 169–289. On the building of the cabinet, see *ibid.*, 169–177.

⁴⁷ SAD, RAT-H, A/3 XXIII, C III/1a, 387A, Aehrenthal to Franz Thun-Hohenstein, Bucharest, 11 March 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 373).

⁴⁸ SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 7 April 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 699).

compromise efforts and to be flexible and moderate in their negotiations with the Czechs.⁴⁹ For his part, Aehrenthal lost no time in trying to influence the new prime minister to adopt the solution to the nationality question contained in his letter to Gołuchowski: "It is clear as day that it is only through the co-operation of the three historical groups of the Germans, Czechs, and Poles, who always have played a decisive role in our history, that the *parliamentary* settlement of the confusion can be achieved."⁵⁰

The negotiations, which began hopefully, soon became bogged down, and the expectancy surrounding Thun's appointment faded quickly. Mistrustful of Thun's pro-Slavic and federalist leanings, German–Austrian parliamentary spokesmen demanded the lifting of Gautsch's ordinance and the establishment of the German language as the official state language before they would enter into a discussion on the language question. Thun refused to accept these conditions, and a deadlock ensued. As a way of breaking the deadlock, Thun invited the German spokesmen to a negotiating conference to open on 12 July.⁵¹ Aehrenthal, who was on leave of absence from his Bucharest post from 16 May to 12 July on account of his father's death, worked along three lines to improve the atmosphere for the conference.⁵² First, he tried to persuade Thun to be more obliging to the German–Austrians and he warned the prime minister of the dangers that a policy leading to the Slavization of Austria would hold for the alliance with Germany. In June 1898, Aehrenthal had a copy of Kálmoky's memorandum against Taaffe's alleged anti-German policy sent to Thun.⁵³ "I believe and hope," Aehrenthal wrote to Thun, "that you will be in agreement with its main points."⁵⁴ Referring to Kálmoky's warning that an internal policy threatening the interests of the Germans would alienate them

49 The existence of these efforts may be gleaned from the following letters in HHStA, NA/1, Ferdinand Buquoy to Aehrenthal, Schloss Hauenstein, 16 April 1898 (Wank, 1: No. 106), and NA/4, Oswald Thun-Salm to Aehrenthal, Beaulieu, 6 April 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 384).

50 Aehrenthal to Franz Thun-Hohenstein, 11 March 1898 (same as n. 47 above). The emphasis is in the original.

51 Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, 2: 311–318, 392–394; Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien*, 2: 203; and Molisch, *Geschichte der deutschnationalen Bewegung*, 197.

52 On the dates of Aehrenthal's leave see HHStA, AR, Fach 4, Personalien/5, Aehrenthal-Ur-laube, Nos. 32–36a.

53 A copy of the memorandum with a cover letter by Count Rudolf von Welsersheimb, head of the political department at the Ballhausplatz, dated 14 June 1898, is deposited in SAD, RAT-H, A-XXIII/C III/Ia, No. 743W. Czedik is wrong in claiming that Aehrenthal sent the memorandum at the end of July 1899. See Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien*, 2: 221. Thun's reaction to Kálmoky's memorandum is unknown.

54 SAD, RAT-H, A-XXIII/C III/Ia, No. 388A, Aehrenthal to Franz Thun-Hohenstein, Doxan, 7 June 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 394).

from the idea of the unified state (*Gesamtstaatsidee*) of which heretofore they had been the strongest supporters, Aehrenthal wrote, "On the sensitive point concerning the position of the Germans, the work is almost prophetic."⁵⁵ One week before Thun's meeting with German party leaders, Aehrenthal met with the prime minister on the Semmering, where Thun gave him a description of his language proposals and his assessment of the situation.⁵⁶ The next day, Aehrenthal, whether at the request of Thun or on his own initiative is not known, wrote to his brother Felix, a representative of the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners in the Austrian parliament, in an optimistic vein. What Franz Thun told him "made a good, well-nigh imposing, impression" on him. Aehrenthal hoped that "his energy will stand the test in the days to come in the same way as his conscientious examination of all of the facts and his patience earn him the highest respect."⁵⁷ Aehrenthal's later recollection of his meeting with Thun was decidedly less positive.⁵⁸

At the same time that he tried to persuade Thun not to lean too far in favor of the Czechs, Aehrenthal tried to persuade his fellow Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners to take the lead in moving the German–Austrians to a more conciliatory position. The German–Austrian political party leaders received Thun's invitation to the conference with little enthusiasm. Apart from their misgivings over what they saw as Thun's neglect of the interests of the Germans in Bohemia, the more moderate German Progressive Party (*Fortschrittspartei*) leaders feared the reaction of the German nationalist press if they should agree to accept Thun's invitation.⁵⁹ In the letter to his brother Felix of 6 July referred to earlier, Aehrenthal wrote that as a Constitutionally Loyal Landowner he knew what he would do if the Bohemian–German Progressive party leaders refused to accept Thun's invitation to a nonbinding discussion:

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The exact date of the meeting — 5 July — is mentioned by Aehrenthal in a letter to Thun. See *ibid.*, No. 831A, Sinaia, 25 July 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 415).

⁵⁷ SAL, RAA/151, Alois Aehrenthal to Felix Aehrenthal, Semmering, 6 July 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 704–705; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 409). Aehrenthal also appealed to his friend Count Oswald Thun-Salm, who had strong German feelings and was committed to the German national cause in Austria, for his support of Thun-Hohenstein's effort at a Czech–German settlement. Aehrenthal's letter is mentioned in HHStA, NA/4, Thun-Salm to Aehrenthal, Vienna 19 July 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 413).

⁵⁸ In his letter to Thun of 25 July (same as n. 56 above), Aehrenthal states that it was only through letters from his brother Felix and Count Oswald Thun-Salm, "that I received... knowledge of the content of your proposal. You will remember that after breakfasting with you on 5 July, we mentioned only the consequences of the rejection of the proposal by the Germans."

⁵⁹ Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, 2: 394.

One can only leave the misguided German people to its fate and place oneself strongly on the side of *authority*. Everyone who has real interests to protect pursues in this regard only the instinct of self-preservation and also duty. For if the Germans should persist in their position, then their entering on directly revolutionary paths is unavoidable.⁶⁰

Beyond internal politics, what was happening in Austria cast its shadow on Austro-Hungarian foreign policy. Alluding to his anticipated appointment as ambassador to Russia, Aehrenthal wrote,

I am undertaking a very heavy task and I can succeed at it only if the nationalities conflict (*Völkerzwist*) in the empire is somewhat calmed and dammed up. You and your close party associates could contribute somewhat to this result if you would point out to the German people, more resolutely than before, the way in which the Germans (*Deutschum*) in Austria and, with that, the whole empire, can be helped.⁶¹

As a third line of action, Aehrenthal sought to influence Emperor Francis Joseph, who since 1897 had been “greatly irritated by the Germans and the subversive ... acts of their violent obstruction [in parliament].”⁶² At the same time that Aehrenthal had a copy of Kálnoky’s memorandum on the repercussions of the nationalities question in Austria-Hungary on the monarchy’s foreign policy sent to Thun, he also had one sent to the emperor.⁶³ This was followed up in the coming months with audiences with Emperor Francis Joseph, in which Aehrenthal expatiated on the dangers of alienating the Germans as a state-preserving element.⁶⁴ At the beginning of July, before the conference with the German spokesmen, Thun had informed Czech and German party leaders of his guidelines for resolving the language conflict. He proposed a five-fold administrative division of Bohemia into Czech, German, predominantly Czech, predominantly German, and truly mixed regions. A district (*Bezirk*)

60 Alois Aehrenthal to Felix Aehrenthal, 6 July 1898 (same as in n. 57 above). The emphasis is in the original.

61 Ibid.

62 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his father, Bucharest, 12 September 1897 (Adlgasser, 2: 654–655; partially printed in Rutkowski, 1; No. 299).

63 See 239 above for the copy sent to Thun. The copy that was sent to Emperor Francis Joseph is in HHStA, PA/XL (Intern 1848–1918)/316 (Kopien von Denkschriften 1877–1911). The latter copy bears the date July 1898. As mentioned earlier, there is no direct evidence that Kálnoky’s memorandum influenced the emperor to turn away from Thun-Hohenstein’s alleged pro-Czech policy. For discussion and analysis of Kálnoky’s memorandum see 91–95 above.

64 See 247, 250–251, 253 below.

in which there was a minority of less than 10 percent would be treated as a single-language Czech or German one respectively. A predominantly Czech or German district would be one in which there was a minority of 10–25 percent; districts with a minority of more than 25 percent would be considered truly mixed. A language law would cover each type of district, with changes possible after every census. The Germans rejected these proposals as even worse for them than those of Gautsch. While satisfied with the creation of separate German and Czech language areas, the Germans were opposed to the threefold division of the mixed areas, because such a division would sharply limit the number of pure German regions and would establish Czech as the language of internal administration far beyond the compact Czech area.⁶⁵ Moreover, given the higher Czech birthrate, the Germans, as Count Oswald Thun-Salm wrote to Aehrenthal, saw the possibility of change after every census as threatening to reduce further the number of single-language areas in Bohemia.⁶⁶ After their rejection of Thun-Hohenstein's language proposals, the Germans, as Aehrenthal learned from Thun-Salm's letter, feared that the prime minister really planned to enact his proposals with the help of the emergency powers contained in Article Fourteen of the constitution, an action that would have further inflamed the situation.⁶⁷

From afar, Aehrenthal again intervened, as he wrote to his mother, "to send an ardent appeal to Franz Thun to modify in the final hour his unsympathetic position toward the Germans."⁶⁸ In a long letter to Thun-Hohenstein at the end of July, Aehrenthal stated that he was not opposed in principle to regulating the language question by the use of Article Fourteen and then preventing parliament, contrary to the stipulations of the article, from deliberating on the regulations when it was convened until it had acted on the urgent affairs of state, i.e., the *Ausgleich* (compromise) laws with Hungary. If the Germans or the Czechs then obstructed the work of parliament, the transition to absolutism could be made. The whole scenario, however, was conditioned on the clear demonstration that Thun had gone to the outermost limits of conciliation and obligingness. Proof that he had done so would be given by eliminating the

65 HHStA, NA/4, Oswald Thun-Salm to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 19 July 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 413).

66 Ibid. Thun-Salm's fears were exaggerated. Census returns from 1880 to 1910 show that the ratio of Czechs to Germans remained stable. See Garver, *The Young Czech Party*, 323, table 1.

67 On the Germans' rejection of Thun-Hohenstein's plan see also Hugelmann, *Das Nationalitätenrecht*, 197–198, 341, and Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, 2: 393–394. In effect, the Czechs also rejected Thun's guidelines since they departed from the principle of the equality of the Czech and German languages in all of Bohemia and Moravia contained in the Badeni language ordinances (ibid., 392).

68 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Sinaia, 27 July 1898 (Adlgasser, 2: 706 n. 1443).

threefold division of mixed districts as well as the idea of linking Bohemia and Moravia administratively, which the German–Austrians saw as a step on the road to the construction of a Czech state. Without meeting those wishes, entrance into the new absolutist era, which would be difficult at best, would meet with the massive resistance of “a thoroughly agitated and ill-tempered German population.”⁶⁹

The apprehension of the German–Austrians and, for different reasons, Aehrenthal himself at the linking of Bohemia and Moravia reflects their concern over a constitutional change harmful to the sociopolitical position of the Germans. Such a change in the direction of a federalist reorganization of the state was indeed in the air.⁷⁰ Thun-Hohenstein entertained the idea, popular in Feudal Conservative circles, of practically eliminating the parliament and giving greater power to the diets. Thun broached the idea in a letter to the Hungarian prime minister, Baron Desiderius Bánffy, with, it may be assumed, the knowledge of Emperor Francis Joseph, since it is highly unlikely that Thun would have done so without first discussing it with him.⁷¹ In the first instance, this *Staatsstreich* (coup d'état) plan, which had reactionary overtones and was reminiscent of Bismarck's *Staatsstreich* plans,⁷² was conceived as a way of getting around the obstruction of parliament by the German parties and providing the government with the authority to renew the compromise with Hungary.⁷³ Therefore, Aehrenthal's warning to Thun was not without justification: “What now must be striven for is a calming of the agitated Germans, who would have to be reassured that no forced transformation of Austria into a federal state is planned.”⁷⁴ In the event, nothing came of Thun's plans for constitutional reform, chiefly because of the resistance of the Hungarians and the German–Austrians, who were supported by Count Philipp Eulenburg, the German ambassador at Vienna, for reasons that will be touched on later.⁷⁵ Aehrenthal concluded his letter to Thun of 25 July with

69 Aehrenthal to Thun-Hohenstein, 25 July 1898 (same as n. 56 above).

70 See Alfred Ableitinger, *Ernest von Koerber und das Verfassungsproblem im Jahre 1900: Österreichische Nationalitäten- und Innenpolitik zwischen Konstitutionalismus, Parlamentarismus und oktroyiertem allgemeinem Wahlrecht*. Studien zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, vol. 12 (Vienna–Cologne–Graz, 1973). See also 101–102 above for Prince Karl Schwarzenberg's ideas for dismantling the existing parliamentary system.

71 See Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 66–67. Bánffy's reply of 20 June 1898 is printed in *ibid.*, 239–246. See also Ableitinger, *Ernest von Koerber*, 33–34.

72 On Bismarck's plans to abolish parliamentary government in Germany see Egmont Zechlin, *Staatsstreichpläne Bismarcks und Wilhelms II. 1890–1894* (Stuttgart, 1929).

73 See the references in Baernreither and Ableitinger cited in n. 71 above.

74 Aehrenthal to Thun-Hohenstein, 25 July 1898 (same as n. 56 above).

75 See Baron Bánffy's reply to Thun's letter cited in n. 71 above and Ableitinger, *Ernest von Koerber*, 34–35. On Eulenburg see 244–246 below.

a warning to the prime minister that "Austria can endure the dissatisfaction of the Czechs more easily than that of the Germans."⁷⁶ A further sharpening of the German question in Austria would seriously jeopardize Austria-Hungary's relationship with the German Empire at a time when relations with Russia had not significantly improved. Hence, he urged Thun to make a final energetic attempt to resolve the Czech-German language conflict through conciliation and manipulation of the existing constitutional structure before putting on "the heavy boots," that is, before acting drastically.⁷⁷

This advice went unheeded, and the negotiations failed to bring national peace or restore orderly parliamentary government. Thun bided his time, believing that the Germans eventually would have to yield to facts. From his post in Bucharest, Aehrenthal kept in touch with events at home. In early December, he returned home on leave and remained in Austria until he left for Russia on 14 March 1899. Again he concerned himself with domestic politics. He spent most of December writing a long memorandum on Austro-Russian relations from both internal and external points of view.⁷⁸ A number of factors motivated Aehrenthal to write the memorandum. Neither the emperor nor Gołuchowski, in Aehrenthal's opinion, seemed sufficiently aware of the dangers involved in an anti-German internal policy. Gołuchowski, in fact, had adopted a critical attitude toward the Bohemian-Germans.⁷⁹ Furthermore, there were still fears of Feudal Conservative plans to abandon the Austrian constitution of 1867 in favor of a federalist political organization. It was against this worrying background that the crisis in the Austro-German alliance had erupted at the end of November 1898.

The crisis revolved around certain actions taken by the Prussian government in its Polish provinces. Near the end of 1897, Berlin initiated a policy of ruthless expulsion of Austrian subjects, mainly Polish and Czech shopkeepers and seasonal workers. The matter festered for several months until it came to a head in the fall of 1898.⁸⁰ In response to questions on the issue by Pol-

⁷⁶ Aehrenthal to Thun-Hohenstein, 25 July 1898 (same as n. 56 above).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See 181–185 above.

⁷⁹ HHStA, NA/4, Oswald Thun-Salm to Aehrenthal, Hainspach/Lipová, 25 August 1898 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 419). Thun-Salm wrote that "Gołuchowski, who certainly knows nothing about northern Bohemia [but] is very critical of the Germans, should go there. I would like to show him around."

⁸⁰ On the crisis see in general Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 185–193; Hayes, "The German Reich and the 'Austrian Question'," ch. 5; Fritz Klein, "Innere Widersprüche im Bündnis zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Deutschland zu Beginn der imperialistischen Epoche," in *Studien zum Deutschen Imperialismus vor 1914*, Fritz Klein, ed. Schriften des Zentralinstituts für Geschichte, vol. 47 (Berlin, 1976), 241–246; GP, 13, 113–176 ("Der Zwischenfall Graf Thun 1898–1899"). See also Wank, "The Impact of the Dual Alliance," 305–308.

ish and Czech members of parliament, Thun stated that the Austrian government would investigate the situation, and if the expulsions were more than just police measures against specific individuals, he would, in cooperation with the common government, vigorously protect the rights of Austrian subjects, even to the point of reciprocating with similar measures against German subjects living in Austria.⁸¹ The German response to Thun's speech contained the scarcely concealed threat of a dissolution of the 1879 alliance treaty. Count Philipp Eulenburg, ambassador at Vienna, informed Gołuchowski in early December 1898 that if the spirit of Thun's speech reflected the prevailing attitude of the Austrian authorities toward Germany, then the alliance could only be form without substance, and the German government and people would be forced to reassess the alliance as part of the "national inventory."⁸² Protestations by Gołuchowski and Emperor Francis Joseph that the Austrian government was not opposed to the alliance with Germany and that Thun's speech simply was a way of demonstrating that the Danubian Monarchy was determined to protect the rights of all of its citizens regardless of nationality carried little weight with Eulenburg and the German government.⁸³

The immediate issue concealed the real reason why Berlin blew up the whole incident into a crisis of confidence in the alliance relationship. Publicly, the German government took the position that the expulsions were purely a Prussian internal matter of no concern to a foreign government. Privately, it was part of Berlin's efforts to influence domestic policies of the Austrian government. The German government, and especially its ambassador at Vienna, harbored a great deal of suspicion over Vienna's course in favor of Czechs, Poles, and clericals, fearing that any concession to Slavs in Austria would stimulate Polish national feelings in the Polish districts of Prussia and Russia. Furthermore, they regarded such pro-Slavic and federalist tendencies, of which Count Thun was a representative, as weakening the foundations of the dual alliance, which, in Berlin's view, rested on the predominance of the Magyars in Hungary and the Germans in Austria.⁸⁴

In effect, the German government and Eulenburg used the Polish question to create difficulties for Thun, which they hoped would drive him from office. In this regard, they were following the precedent of Bismarck in his opposition

81 Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 185–188.

82 Ibid., 190–192. See Eulenburg's memorandum on Thun-Hohenstein's alleged pro-Slavic and pro-Clerical course appended to Werner Frauendienst, "Zur Reichskrise Österreich-Ungarns," *Ostdeutsche Wissenschaft* 5 (1958): 377–379, 393–399 (the latter pages for Eulenburg's memorandum). See also Wank, "The Impact of the Dual Alliance," 306–308.

83 Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 192–193.

84 See Eulenburg's memorandum cited in n. 82 above. See also Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 190, 192, 445 and Wank, "The Impact of the Dual Alliance," 294, 306–308.

to the Taaffe government, which was guilty of the same alleged pro-Slavic and federalist policies as the Thun government.⁸⁵ Emperor Francis Joseph resisted demands from Berlin that the prime minister publicly retract his speech, but German threats to dissolve the alliance and fears that its dissolution would lead to internal unrest contributed to the emperor's later loss of confidence in Thun.⁸⁶ In any event, Eulenburg's attempts to undermine Thun served to support the concerted attacks on the prime minister mounted by Aehrenthal and German–Austrian political leaders in the summer of 1899. Paradoxically, Eulenburg wrongly believed that "Aehrenthal swims wholly in Thun's channel, even if he criticized his ability as a statesman."⁸⁷

It was in this atmosphere of domestic and foreign policy crisis that Aehrenthal sent his ringing appeal to Gołuchowski, which he hoped would persuade the foreign minister to embark on an internal and foreign policy preventing both the dissolution of the Dual Alliance and the Habsburg Monarchy itself.⁸⁸ He again warned Gołuchowski against any attempt to reorganize Austria along federalist or autonomous lines. Dualism was the basis on which the Austro-Hungarian–German alliance of 1879 was concluded, and the continuation of the alliance was logical only if the Magyars and the Germans, its strongest supporters, remained in control. Germany would be opposed to the creation of an autonomous Bohemia, and Russia, fearing the unraveling of the Polish question, would be opposed to a Polish-dominated autonomous Galicia. Aehrenthal predicted that "the departure from the constitution of 1867, which depends entirely on a superior position of the Germans, will lead to a break not only with Germany but also with Russia, in which case in order to protect their own interests, the two empires would reach out and put things in order here."⁸⁹ Conversely, both powers had a stake in the maintenance of the Dual Monarchy. Dualism therefore provided the strongest foundation for a successful internal and external policy. Castigating radical nationalism of all kinds, Aehrenthal nevertheless recognized the potency of the spirit of nationalism: "In our time, when everybody thinks and feels national, a state of the size and significance of Austria cannot remain without a national-racial character (*national-geschlechtslos*). Up to now, Austria has had a German character; it will remain powerful and sought after in future centuries if it

85 Hayes, "Bismarck on Austrian Parliamentarianism," 81–86. See also Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring*, 221–229.

86 See Verosta, *Theorie und Realität von Bündnissen*, 192–193.

87 Eulenburg to Bülow, Vienna, 26 May 1899, printed in *Philipp Eulenburgs Politische Korrespondenz*, 3: No. 1394.

88 *Denkschrift des neuernannten Botschafters in Petersburg...31 Dezember 1898* (see 181 n. 96).

For a discussion of the foreign policy dimension of the memorandum see 181–185 above.

89 Ibid.

takes care to preserve this German character.”⁹⁰ A “Czech or Polish version” of Austria was hardly thinkable, and the attempt to produce the one or the other “would plunge the dynasty and the monarchy into even greater disturbances.”⁹¹ Hence, the creation of a “certain superiority” in the state for the Germans, Aehrenthal believed, would accord with the nationalist tendencies of the era.⁹² The solution to Austria-Hungary’s problems ultimately lay, according to Aehrenthal, not in concessions to the nationalities, but, as we have seen, in a resolute imperial foreign policy aimed at attaining Austro-Hungarian supremacy in the western half of the Balkan peninsula.

As we know, Gołuchowski was unimpressed with Aehrenthal’s line of reasoning. Nor was Aehrenthal any more successful in an hour-long audience with Emperor Francis Joseph, “to whom I poured out my heart on many questions,” in trying to persuade the emperor to adopt a course of action favorable to the Germans.⁹³ Prince Karl Schwarzenberg, to whom Aehrenthal sent a copy of his 31 December memorandum, warmly applauded the foreign policy recommendations, but rejected as unrealistic those concerning internal policy.⁹⁴ By the beginning of 1899, Thun’s objective of reviving orderly parliamentary life in Austria foundered on the obstruction of the German parties. After a last, short session (17 January to 1 February), parliament was dissolved for an indefinite period, and Thun, like his predecessors, had to resort to Article Fourteen to carry on the business of government. Like Gautsch before him, Thun was compelled, at the end of December 1898, to extend the old *Ausgleich* with Hungary for yet another year by the use of that emergency clause of the constitution.⁹⁵ Joseph Maria Baernreither reports that Aehrenthal, who still had not left for St. Petersburg, was active in political circles in Vienna and determined to bring down the Thun government because of its inability to achieve a settlement in the language question or obtain parliamentary passage of the new *Ausgleich* laws, which deeply compromised the monarchy’s international position and prestige.⁹⁶

While deeply disappointed at Thun’s failure to restore political stability, Aehrenthal did not completely give up on him, if only because the emperor’s continuing confidence in his prime minister made his resignation unlikely.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Vienna, 17 February 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 472).

94 See 102–104 above.

95 Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien*, 2: 215–216, and Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, 2: 394–397.

96 Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 95–96.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1899, Aehrenthal continued his efforts to influence both the German party leaders and Thun in the direction of a compromise on the language issue. The task was not easy. Among the Germans, "the mistrust of the present ministry is enormous," wrote Ludwig Schlesinger, a member of the German Progressive Party (*Fortschrittspartei*) and a leading Bohemian–German spokesman, to Aehrenthal near the end of February.⁹⁷ When Thun, having failed in his parliamentary efforts to resolve the Czech–German language conflict, announced his intention to shift the scene of the negotiations to the provincial level, Aehrenthal, acting on behalf of the moderate Bohemian–German party leaders, sent Thun a short memorandum advising against such a move,⁹⁸ informing him that the German parties currently were engaged in drawing up a German national program that would not be completed before Easter.⁹⁹ Therefore, it would be fruitless to convene the diet before then. The prospects for negotiating a settlement after the diet convened would be enhanced if the crown did two things beforehand: (1) announced, in a letter to the Austrian and Hungarian prime ministers, the creation of an advisory council of state to deal with the language question in Austria; and (2) a royal decree temporarily sanctioning the creation of German, Czech, and mixed-language regions in Bohemia and Moravia and the exclusive use of German as the language of the internal service.¹⁰⁰ It may be assumed that some of the thoughts contained in Aehrenthal's memorandum were expressed in an audience he had with the emperor on 17 February.¹⁰¹ Actually, at the time Aehrenthal sent Thun the memorandum outlined above, he told Heinrich Friedjung that by May, Thun would see that he was unable to negotiate on the basis of his language proposals and would be forced to resign.¹⁰² Yet even after he had concluded that "Franz [Thun] does not possess the deft touch that we sorely need," he made one last attempt to persuade the prime minister to give up his "unsympathetic" attitude toward the Germans.¹⁰³ Shortly before he left

97 HHStA, NA/3, Ludwig Schlesinger to Aehrenthal, Prague, 23 February 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 478). The quotation is in an attached note dated 25 February 1899.

98 SAD, RAT-H, A-XXIII, C III/Id, 832A, *Gedanken von Louis Aehrenthal*, undated (Rutkowski, 1: No. 493). The title of the memorandum was included by Count Franz Thun-Hohenstein personally. From its contents, the connection to Schlesinger's letter of 23 February, and the fact that Aehrenthal left for St. Petersburg on 14 March, it can be dated between late February and early March 1899.

99 Aehrenthal learned about the preparation of the program from Schlesinger's letter cited in n. 97 above.

100 *Gedanken von Louis Aehrenthal* (same as n. 98).

101 See 247 above.

102 Stb/HS, NF/2, Aufzeichnungen über verschiedene Persönlichkeiten der österreichischen Politik: Aehrenthal, 4 March 1899 (Friedjung, 1: 238–241).

103 SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Karl Schwarzenberg, Vienna, 12 March 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 498).

Vienna for his new post in St. Petersburg, Aehrenthal sent Thun a memorandum consisting of two parts. The first part contained a detailed plan for the organization of Bohemia along Czech and German national lines.¹⁰⁴

This plan was the work of Ludwig Schlesinger, a member of the Bohemian–German committee that had drafted the section on Bohemia in the national program of the German parties — *Pfingstprogramm* (Whitsun program) — published in May 1899, and was in fact an early version of the final draft of the relevant section of that program.¹⁰⁵ Although Schlesinger requested Aehrenthal to inform no one but the emperor of the thoughts contained in the memorandum, Aehrenthal sent a copy to Thun without revealing Schlesinger's authorship.¹⁰⁶ As a follow-up to his advice to delay the convening of the diet, Aehrenthal probably hoped that by giving Thun some advance idea of the shape of the German national demands, the prime minister would modify his own proposals in ways that came closer to German desires.

Aehrenthal, in a handwritten supplement, presented ideas on how to implement the proposals contained in the first part of the memorandum.¹⁰⁷ On their own initiative, Aehrenthal stated, neither the Czechs nor the Germans would be able to reach a settlement. Therefore, he advised the use of Article Fourteen to issue the necessary enforcement ordinances for the ethnographic

104 SAD, RAT-H, A-XXIII, C III/1d, 832A, *Gedanken über die Regelung der sprachlichen Verhältnisse in Böhmen*. Another copy of the memorandum for the emperor is in HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv, Geheimakten/20. Neither bears a date, but a note on the folder of the copy in HHStA reads "Sprachenfrage Aehrenthal. Zur Zeit Ministeriums Thun 1898/1899." An entry under Aehrenthal in the catalog of the Thun archive reads "1899–Botschafter in St. Petersburg: Politische Gedanken über die Regelung der sprachlichen Verhältnisse in Böhmen." The document is printed in two places: Rutkowski, 1: No. 494, and Wank, "Zwei Dokumente Aehrenthals aus den Jahren 1898–99," 342–362. Aehrenthal sent another copy of the memorandum to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg. Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, 12 March 1899 (same as n. 103).

105 Schlesinger is identified as the author of the reorganization plan in a letter from Aehrenthal to his mother after the death of Schlesinger in December 1899. "Yesterday, I read through my correspondence with him [Schlesinger] and the memorandum I transmitted to the emperor last winter." SAL, RAA/123, St. Petersburg, 1 January 1900 (Adlgasser, 2: 747–748). In his letter to Aehrenthal of 23 February 1899 (same as n. 97 above), Schlesinger mentions enclosing a memorandum on the ethnographic organization of Bohemia.

106 Schlesinger desired anonymity because the final draft of the program might have been different from his memorandum and he did not wish to have his ideas construed as an offer to Thun.

107 On Aehrenthal's authorship of the supplement to Schlesinger's memorandum see HHStA, NA/3, Schlesinger to Aehrenthal, Prague, 1 July 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 546). "That Your Excellency composed a supplement to my memorandum was an excellent thought, since I myself said nothing about carrying out my proposals and very little about the state language."

organization of Bohemia. At the same time, the emperor would promulgate a royal decree, described by Aehrenthal as a “necessary amendment (*Ergänzung*) to the constitution,” which would set forth the uniqueness of German as the language of the central administration and define its area of applicability. Aehrenthal ended with a ringing appeal for decisive action:

The internal situation in Austria demands a restoration. The longer the existing confused conditions persist, the more difficult becomes their extirpation. Moreover, from that [the confused conditions] develop unhealthy, doubtful relations to the other half of the empire, and thereby the international position of the monarchy is influenced disadvantageously.... The hereditary defect of the Austrian — pessimism — is already gripping the young and threatens to stifle their every idealistic impulse, every interest in the state and in the feeling of solidarity with the state. These are pathological manifestations which deserve the most serious consideration, for it is a question of nothing less than the rescue of the young on the threshold of maturity who are called on to form the support of the throne and the fatherland.¹⁰⁸

That Thun remained impervious to Aehrenthal's passionate exhortations, only called down upon him the wrath of their author, who, in keeping with his three-pronged *modus operandi*, proceeded to send a copy of Schlesinger's memorandum together with the supplement to the emperor, and in an audience apparently held on 12 March, shortly before he left Vienna for St. Petersburg, urged the adoption of the proposals contained in both documents. The results of the audience are unclear. In a letter to Aehrenthal, Schlesinger, in response to one from the ambassador, wrote that “the gracious reception of the memorandum by His Majesty and his listening to your excellent explanation is very gratifying.”¹⁰⁹ However, in a letter to Karl Schwarzenberg written two days before his departure, Aehrenthal wrote that Emperor Francis Joseph “listened to [his ideas] very graciously and patiently; however, the emperor's prejudices and mistrust of the German parties is *very strong*...[and] I did not indulge myself in any illusions and did not expect any effect from my oral and written presentations.”¹¹⁰

108 *Gedanken über die Regelung der sprachlichen Verhältnisse in Böhmen — Ergänzung* (same as n. 104 above). Joseph Maria Baernreither also proposed making German the language of state by imperial decree. See his *Denkschrift über die Lage in Österreich* written sometime during the summer of 1899. Baernreither's memorandum is printed in Rutkowski, 1: No. 561. See 252–253 below on the meeting of Aehrenthal and Baernreither in the summer of 1899. Baernreither had resigned in late September 1898 as minister of commerce in the Thun government.

109 Schlesinger to Aehrenthal, 1 July 1899 (same as n. 107 above).

110 Aehrenthal to Karl Schwarzenberg, 12 March 1899 (see n. 103 above). The emphasis is in

Even so, whatever the outcome of his audiences with the emperor, Aehrenthal was right in his prediction that the futility of Thun's language proposals would be apparent by May. The minimal demands of the *Pfingstprogramm* of the moderate (i.e., excluding the pan-Germans) German political parties of 20 May 1899 included the division of Bohemia into pure Czech and German administrative regions with only a few mixed regions; the division of the chief judicial and administrative organs of the province along national lines; the separation of the heavily German-inhabited provinces of Austria, including those in Bohemia, from the non-German areas; the confirmation of German as the *de facto* language of state; the preservation of the German character of the Habsburg Empire and closer ties to the German Empire.¹¹¹ These demands opened an unbridgeable gap between Thun and the Germans.

Between the day of his departure for St. Petersburg and his return to Austria on 30 June 1899, Aehrenthal kept in touch with domestic politics mainly through correspondence with Joseph Maria Baernreither. As soon as he arrived home, Aehrenthal threw himself into the political situation. It had developed as he had foreseen. By the beginning of June, the emperor's confidence in Thun began to weaken as the prime minister appeared unable to revive orderly parliamentary life or resolve the language question and as the German government made it quite plain that it would be easier to end the rancorous dispute over the expulsion of Austrian Slavs from Prussia if Thun were no longer prime minister.¹¹²

The change in Emperor Francis Joseph's attitude toward Thun and the German–Austrians was signaled by the emperor's remarks to Baron Johann Chlumecky, a respected German liberal political figure, in an audience on 7 June 1899. Chlumecky reported to Baernreither that the emperor no longer thought of holding on to Thun at all costs and strongly denied that the emperor intended to abandon the Germans.¹¹³ Aehrenthal's discussions with

the original. Baernreither reports in a summary of events dated April 1899 that Prince Max Egon von Fürstenberg, a member of the Austrian House of Lords (*Herrenhaus*), told him that Aehrenthal, in his efforts to bring about a change in internal affairs, went so far as to transmit to the emperor a memorandum on the subject. The emperor, according to the report, raised objections that cooled down Aehrenthal. See Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 100 n. 2.

111 See Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien*, 2: 180–190; Molisch, *Geschichte der deutschnationalen Bewegung*, 203–205; Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 1: 374–375. The text of the program may be found in Sutter, *Die Badenischen Sprachenverordnungen*, 2: 461–476.

112 See HHStA, NA/1, Baernreither to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 7 and 23 May 1899. See also Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 95–96, 100 n. 2 and *idem*, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 34.

113 Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 109 n. 1. The summary of Chlumecky's

leading political figures in Vienna confirmed Chlumecky's perceptions. Before he left for Gastein on 3 July, Aehrenthal told Baron Joseph von Schwegel that the emperor desired a Czech–German agreement to end the untenable situation and considered the *Pfingstprogramm* worthy of discussion. However, Thun, who by his favoritism toward the Czechs had forfeited all claims to trust on the part of the Germans was not the man to conduct negotiations on this basis. Someone else had to be entrusted with the government.¹¹⁴ The reports of both Chlumecky and Aehrenthal set in motion a vigorous anti-Thun campaign among the Constitutionally Loyal Large Landowners and moderate German–Austrian political leaders, which was at the same time a campaign to harness the royal power to preserving the sociopolitical predominance of the Germans in Austria. The end of June seemed like a propitious time to launch an attack on Thun. The vexing question of the conclusion of a new *Ausgleich* with Hungary had been disposed of by Thun's enacting into law, by the use of Article Fourteen, the *Ausgleich* proposals agreed upon by Badeni and the Hungarian prime minister in 1896–1897.

At a meeting of the above-mentioned leaders in Vienna on 6 July 1899, Chlumecky and Schwegel made known the views of the emperor. The assembled leaders decided that the time had come to tell the emperor that Thun was no longer capable of bringing about a change in the political situation, and Schwegel proposed Aehrenthal as Thun's successor. Like Bismarck earlier, who had come from St. Petersburg to intervene in the internal crisis in Prussia, Aehrenthal would come from Russia to rescue Austria. According to Schwegel, Aehrenthal was ideal for the task because he possessed the confidence of the crown and could win that of the Germans. Although Schwegel's proposal did not arouse much enthusiasm, it probably was the source for rumors that began to circulate at the beginning of August that Aehrenthal would succeed Thun as prime minister.¹¹⁵

Although no decision on a successor to Thun was made at the meeting, Baernreither decided to pursue the contact with Aehrenthal. At Gastein, from

audience with the emperor, which is based on Baernreither's diary, appears in Ernst Rutkowski, "Aehrenthal über die innenpolitische Lage Österreich-Ungarns im Sommer 1899," *Südost-Forschungen* 32 (1964): 284–298. Rutkowski warns that, contrary to the assurances of the editor of the published parts of Baernreither's diary, Oskar von Mitis, the edited version is not faithful to the original. Important passages are completely omitted or considerably shortened in footnotes. See Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 109 n. 1 and 111 n. 1. Chlumecky, minister of agriculture and commerce in the liberal Auersperg government (1871–1879), was president of the lower house of the Austrian parliament 1893–1897 and afterward a member of the Austrian House of Lords.

114 Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 109–111. See also Rutkowski, "Aehrenthal über die innenpolitische Lage," 287–288.

115 Rutkowski, "Aehrenthal über die innenpolitische Lage," 290.

18 to 22 July, the two men held exhaustive discussions on the internal and foreign policy of Austria-Hungary, about which Aehrenthal “showed great insight and great seriousness.”¹¹⁶ Baernreither summarized their discussion in a four-point promemoria that was approved by Schwegel and several of the others who had attended the meeting on 6 July.¹¹⁷ Firstly, Thun enjoyed no trust because of his continual concessions to the Slavs, which left the moderate parties with no choice but continued obstruction in parliament. Secondly, the crown must give the Germans a “sign of peace” to convince them that it had not embarked on a program to Slavitize Austria as a way of paralyzing the power of attraction of the German Empire on the German–Austrians. Thirdly, a visible sign of peace would be the immediate enactment into law by *Octroi* (imperial decree) of that part of the *Pfingstprogramm* that dealt with German as the language of communication (*Vermittlungssprache*) for the centralized authorities. The same extraconstitutional authority would be used to regulate the language conflict in Bohemia by dividing Bohemia and Moravia along German and Czech ethnic lines. Lastly, before the crown undertook the widely feared measures of constitutional reform, an honest attempt at a Czech–German compromise and the revival of parliament had to be made. In the event that this attempt at a compromise failed, then the extreme remedy of a constitutional change might be applied, although “certainly it would lead to the dissolution of Austria.”¹¹⁸

On the morning of 22 July, Aehrenthal had an audience with Emperor Francis Joseph in which he presented the four points of Baernreither’s promemoria.¹¹⁹ The audience led to no immediate results, since the emperor was still reluctant to dismiss Thun. The situation became urgent in August, when Thun decided to initiate a new round of negotiations on the language question. While some Constitutionally Loyal leaders tried to influence the emperor directly, Aehrenthal did so indirectly by writing to Baron Friedrich von Beck, chief of the Austro-Hungarian general staff and an old adviser of the emperor.¹²⁰

116 HHStA, NBa/4, Tagebuch V, 4. Quoted in Rutkowski, “Aehrenthal über die innenpolitische Lage,” 290. See also Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 110.

117 Baernreither’s memorandum is printed in Rutkowski, “Aehrenthal über die innenpolitische Lage,” 291–292.

118 Ibid., 292. The passage is missing from Baernreither’s published diary (see n. 113 above).

119 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, Bad Ischl, 22 July 1899. “At 9:30 this morning, I had an audience. God be praised, I found the emperor appearing well and mentally alert.” Rutkowski is incorrect in stating that Aehrenthal’s meeting with Emperor Francis Joseph never took place. “Aehrenthal über die innenpolitische Lage,” 293.

120 Aehrenthal to Beck, St. Petersburg, 20 August 1899. The letter is appended to Rutkowski, “Aehrenthal über die innenpolitische Lage,” 293–297. Baernreither mentions that Aehrenthal was working on a memorandum that he was going to send to the emperor in favor of

In the letter, Aehrenthal stressed both the possibility of and necessity for good relations with Russia. Relations with St. Petersburg would shape themselves more favorably for Austria-Hungary if Russia had a higher estimation of the Dual Monarchy's internal and external strength. That could be achieved only through a rapid settlement of the internal crisis, which could come about only through Thun's dismissal and the reactivation of the principles of the 1867 constitution, which would be possible only through the restoration of the Germans to that position in the state "which falls to them by the spirit of the 1867 constitution and also as a consequence of their higher culture." The Germans were despondent and resigned, Aehrenthal wrote, because for twenty years they had fought for the validation of the principles of the 1867 constitution, only to find out that the crown was oriented to other principles. If the Germans were not given the opportunity of once again becoming a government party, they would fall even further than they had already into the extreme radical nationalist cause. If a constitutional change became necessary, Aehrenthal would "consider it less harmful for the crown and the monarchy to entrust the eventual suspension of the constitution to a centralist rather than a federalist ministry."¹²¹

Aehrenthal also sought, again in an indirect way, to put pressure on Thun to resign by writing, in the same vein as his letter to Beck, to Prince Karl Schwarzenberg, Thun's brother-in-law. Earlier, Schwarzenberg had thrown cold water on Aehrenthal's idea of giving the Germans the leading political role they had formerly held, which, Schwarzenberg maintained, was inconsistent with the existing constitution that Aehrenthal claimed to uphold.¹²² Rebutting the criticism of the Feudal Conservative leader, Aehrenthal protested that by a leading or pace-setting role for the Germans he did not mean parliamentary hegemony. What was necessary was "hitching the Germans to the Austrian wagon of state again" by forming a coalition in which they could participate as a major component. His argument for supporting the division of Bohemia and Moravia into German and Czech parts was hardly one to allay the suspicion that what Aehrenthal sought was in fact a preferential position for the Germans in Austria that would protect them against "the natural development of things," which, he admitted, militated against such a position:

a pro-German turn in domestic policy. Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary*, 34. It is not clear what Baernreither is referring to. The only memorandum on the subject that I know of from 1899 is the one cited in n. 104 above that Aehrenthal sent to the emperor in March 1899. The reference might well be to Aehrenthal's memorandum-size letter to General Beck.

121 Aehrenthal to Beck, 20 August 1899 (same as in n. 120 above).

122 See 102–103 above.

For the Czech it is merely a matter of national vanity and overbearingness when he insists that outside the compact Czech area...a Czech lawyer can plead in Czech. Not so for the Bohemian-Germans, who have the feeling, and I believe that feeling does not deceive them, of being threatened in their *own* home by the Czechs, who have larger numbers of children, who are more enterprising and politically and socially more aggressive.¹²³

Aehrenthal did not limit his attempts to persuading aristocrats in a position to influence the emperor, Thun, or German-Austrian political party leaders. Through an acquaintanceship with Dr. Karel Kramář, the Young Czech leader, Aehrenthal sought to influence the Czech political leadership. The relationship between Aehrenthal and Kramář began in 1890, when Aehrenthal was first secretary of the embassy in St. Petersburg. The two men met from time to time to discuss domestic politics and foreign policy whenever Aehrenthal returned home on leave. After Aehrenthal became ambassador to Russia in 1899, Kramář sought his assistance in obtaining a divorce for a Russian woman whom he hoped to marry.¹²⁴ At the beginning of February 1900, Aehrenthal informed Kramář that the divorce had been granted and added to his congratulations the hope

that at the moment when the long striving for consolidation of your life's happiness is beckoning, you might *strongly* contribute to caring for the wounds of our dear fatherland and bring about its cure. If the conference [of Czech and German leaders] now in session is not capable of at least bringing about an armistice...then we can with certainty count on chaotic conditions."¹²⁵

In a previous letter, Aehrenthal severely criticized Kramář for supporting "rubbish" such as the Czech military recruits' insistence on responding at muster with the Czech *zde* rather than with the German *hier*. This practice, Aehrenthal claimed, stirred national antagonisms and affected higher state interests, namely the army.¹²⁶ Aehrenthal was equally critical of Kramář's support for members of the Serbian Radical Party who had been tried in Belgrade for political offenses. Aehrenthal approvingly cited the remarks made to

123 SAT, RAS, Aehrenthal to Schwarzenberg, St. Petersburg, 2 September 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 560). The emphasis is in the original.

124 On Kramář's relationship with Aehrenthal see Kramář, *Paměti*, 238-239, and Stanley B. Winters, "The Impact of the Dual Alliance upon the Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: A Centennial Appraisal," *East Central Europe* 7 (1980): 326-344, specifically 333-334.

125 ANM, Aehrenthal to Kramář, St. Petersburg, 9 February 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 153). The emphasis is in the original.

126 Ibid., 18 January 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 143).

him by a Russian diplomat: "If they [the Radicals] were in Russia, they would have been sent to Siberia long ago."¹²⁷ Kramář's reply that the Serbian Radicals would in time become a respectable parliamentary party like the Young Czechs fell on deaf ears.¹²⁸ Aehrenthal had little understanding of the development of modern political parties.

With the granting of the divorce, the outward rationale for a more frequent correspondence disappeared. The last two letters in 1903 reveal a distinct coolness. Rather than beginning with "Very honored Doctor" (*Sehr geehrter Herr Doktor*), Kramář is addressed as "Honored Doctor" (*Geehrter Herr Doktor*).¹²⁹ Aehrenthal criticized continued Czech obstruction as incomprehensible and urged Kramář to take note of Russia's realistic attitude toward Germany:

Strong Russia understands how to read the signs of the time and strives to live with neighboring, powerful Germany on the friendliest possible footing. Only the leaders of the relatively small Czech people allow themselves not only to hand over the monarchy more and more to Hungary but also to compromise its position in foreign affairs. Here in Russia, German is obligatory in the high schools! That would be a nice argument for the next language debate!¹³⁰

At the end of October 1903, Aehrenthal agreed to meet with Kramář but feared that "Practically, however, ...nothing much will come of it since *de part et d'autre*, that is, on the part of the Germans and your party, much is severely mutilated."¹³¹ Aehrenthal's efforts in the end proved fruitless, because, as is apparent from their letters, Aehrenthal and Kramář each sought to use the other. What brought them together initially was their common interest in Austro-Russian relations. Where Aehrenthal, however, saw close relations with Russia as a restraint on Slavic national movements inside and outside the monarchy, Kramář saw closer relations as weakening the alliance with the German Empire, which would strengthen the political hand of the Czechs and the other Slavic nationalities in their efforts to attain national autonomy. Similarly, in the Czech-German language conflict, Aehrenthal tried to persuade Kramář to accept the German *Pfingstprogramm* as the basis for negotiations, while Kramář tried to persuade Aehrenthal to use his influence among the Constitutionally Loyal Landowners to wean them away from the program as a minimal basis for negotiations.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ HHStA, NA/2, Kramář to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 2 February 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 150).

¹²⁹ ANM, Aehrenthal to Kramář, St. Petersburg, 29 January 1903, and Doxan, 31 October 1903 (Wank, 1: Nos. 210, 232).

¹³⁰ Aehrenthal to Kramář, 29 January 1903 (same as in n. 129)

¹³¹ Aehrenthal to Kramář, 31 October 1903 (same as in n. 129).

By mid September 1899, all hope for a Czech–German settlement had collapsed. On 16 September 1899, the Czech representatives in the parliament and the Bohemian diet issued a declaration that constituted a response to the *Pfingstprogramm*, affirming the unity of the lands of the Bohemian crown and the equality of the Czech and German languages in the government and administration of the province.¹³² At about the same time, Aehrenthal received a letter from Baernreither informing him that the crisis was coming to a head. Any attempt on Thun's part to convene parliament after failing to conclude an agreement on the language question "would be a clear invitation to physical struggle in parliament and in the street." He urged Aehrenthal to return home by the end of September, when it was clear that decisions would have to be made.¹³³ Aehrenthal did return home; the Thun government fell on 2 October 1899.

Whether Aehrenthal contributed directly to delivering the *coup de grâce* to Thun is difficult to ascertain from available documents. But, in a larger sense, it is clear that he played an important role in the broader campaign leading to Thun's downfall. Joseph Maria Baernreither hints at this in a letter to Prince Max Egon von Fürstenberg at the beginning of September: "The mémoire of our diplomatic friend transmitted [to Emperor Francis Joseph] in the spring was certainly not without effect, not to mention the warnings from all sides."¹³⁴ This is attested not only by his correspondence and other documents, but also by reports that began to circulate at the beginning of August that Aehrenthal would be appointed to succeed Thun.¹³⁵ A banner headline in the *Prager Tagblatt* hailed Aehrenthal as "the coming man."¹³⁶ *Národní Listy*, the Young Czech newspaper, also reported Aehrenthal's pending appointment as prime minister.¹³⁷ Newspaper reports attributed Aehrenthal's anticipated appointment to Gołuchowski's desire to rid himself of "his most serious ri-

132 Molisch, *Geschichte der deutschnationalen Bewegung*, 205–206.

133 HHStA, NA/1, Baernreither to Aehrenthal, Lünz bei Lubenz (his estate in Western Bohemia), 11 September 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 568). From Baernreither's letter, we learn that Aehrenthal had already been informed about the most important matters by a letter to him from Count Oswald Thun-Salm.

134 Baernreither to Fürstenberg, Lünz, 4 September 1899 (Rutkowski 1: No. 564).

135 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 6 August 1899 (Adlgasser, 2: 740).

136 Ibid., Maria Aehrenthal to Alois Aehrenthal, Doxan, 11 September 1899 (Adlgasser, 2: 742–743). His mother mentions the *Prager Tagblatt* article and also reports in the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*. See also Adlgasser: 2: 742 n. 1529, which expands on the reference in the letter.

137 HHStA, NA/2, Telegram Friedjung to Aehrenthal, 7 September 1899, and *ibid.*, NF/5, Aehrenthal to Friedjung, St. Petersburg, 13 September 1899 (Wank, 1: No. 129).

val.”¹³⁸ Some of Aehrenthal’s opponents, according to Friedjung, suggested that Aehrenthal wanted the job because he was ambitious.¹³⁹ Although the rumor probably emanated from German–Austrian political circles and was related to his possible appointment as Thun’s successor having been broached at the meeting of German party leaders in Vienna on 6 July,¹⁴⁰ Aehrenthal attributed the rumor to Joseph Kaizl, the Young Czech politician and minister of finance in Thun’s cabinet.¹⁴¹

Aehrenthal on his part called the reports “stupid” and “baseless” and an act of spite aimed at Gołuchowski and perhaps also at himself.¹⁴² The rumors of his impending appointment, he wrote to his mother, left him “completely cold” and were unpleasant “only insofar as it could be assumed that I had aspirations that naturally are wanting in me.”¹⁴³ Whether Aehrenthal could have become Austrian prime minister, or even wanted to, is doubtful, but contemplating the possibility might have been momentarily attractive to him in a psychological sense. To become prime minister for the purpose of rescuing Austria from chaos embodied that fusion of ambition and altruism which was emotionally gratifying for Aehrenthal. However, it is more likely that by the fall of 1899, he was even more convinced than he had been in December 1898 that the salvation of the monarchy lay in the unifying function of an active foreign policy. Consequently, the foreign minister’s post and not the prime minister’s was the place from which to launch a rescue mission. There is no reason to doubt what he wrote to Kramář: “I only could have *one* ambition, to work in the direction of consolidating Russian–Austrian relations.”¹⁴⁴

Thun’s successor, Count Manfred Clary-Aldringen, remained in office until the end of December 1899, just long enough to withdraw the Gautsch language ordinances, which restored the status quo that had existed before Badeni issued his language regulations.¹⁴⁵ After that, the German parties ended their obstruction, and parliament was reconvened, although the Czech–German conflict continued to paralyze parliament’s effectiveness. After another

138 *Neue Freie Presse*, 7 September 1899, morning edition. Quoted in Adlgasser, 2: 743 n. 1530.

139 HHStA, NA/2, Friedjung to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 18 September 1899 (Wank, 1: No. 130).

140 See 252 above.

141 ANM, Aehrenthal to Kramář, St. Petersburg, 29 September 1899 (Rutkowski, 1: No. 584).

Kramář reported to Aehrenthal that Kaizl denied the allegation. HHStA, NA/2, Kramář to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 2 February 1900 (Wank, 1: No. 150).

142 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 14 September 1899. See also Aehrenthal to Kramář, 29 September 1899 (same as in n. 141).

143 Aehrenthal to his mother, 14 September 1899 (same as in n. 142).

144 Aehrenthal to Kramář, 29 September 1899 (same as n. 141). The emphasis is in the original.

145 On the Clary-Aldringen government see Czedik, *Zur Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Ministerien*, 2: 290–304.

transitional government headed by Heinrich von Wittek, the emperor appointed Ernest von Koerber as prime minister, heading a nonparliamentary cabinet of bureaucrats (*Beamtenregierung*) composed largely of German–Austrian officials. It governed in a more-or-less authoritarian fashion, which was the only way in which stalemated Austrian society supposedly could be governed.¹⁴⁶

The fall of the Thun government was cause for some optimism on Aehrenthal's part, but it was a qualified optimism. In September 1899, Baernreither had written despairingly to Aehrenthal, "Austria is a field of fragments (*Trümmerfeld*); that is not just a phrase. This becomes clear when one considers the individual measures necessary to free us from our situation."¹⁴⁷ Aehrenthal struck a more optimistic chord. After Koerber's appointment, he wrote to his mother on New Year's Day, "I do not want to give up the hope that the recovery process will continue to show signs of progress."¹⁴⁸ A few days later, however, a more pessimistic note crept in: "I gladly would like to live to see better times allotted our old empire and our good old emperor. For the present, it looks like that will not happen."¹⁴⁹ Aehrenthal's New Year's wish for better times was fulfilled in the short term; the longer term justified the gloomier outlook of the second letter to his mother.

Against Hungarian Separatist Strivings, 1902–1906

The nationalist passions that had raged for three years in Austria appeared to have been spent, and the Koerber government's rule by emergency decree temporarily removed parliament as a noisy obstruction to the business of governing. Moreover, Koerber, an able and imaginative official whom Aehrenthal held in high regard,¹⁵⁰ was determined to divert attention from the nationalities problem by a far-reaching program of large public investment in economic and cultural development in which all of the nationalities could find a common

146 On the Wittek government see *ibid.*, 2: 305–308, on the Koerber cabinet *ibid.*, 2: 310–311, 363–383, and Ableitinger, *Ernest von Koerber*, 55–81.

147 Baernreither to Aehrenthal, 11 September 1899 (same as n. 133 above).

148 SAL, RAA/123, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 1 January 1900 (Adlgasser, 2: 747–748).

149 *Ibid.*, 10 January 1900 (Adlgasser, 1: 749).

150 After Koerber's resignation, Aehrenthal told him, "Seldom has a report made me as sad as did that of your resignation! I belong to those who looked to the future calmly because we trusted your foresight, intelligence, and readiness to sacrifice yourself in order to steer the ship of state through all storms. Now even that future has been taken from us." Stb/HS, NF/1, Aehrenthal to Koerber (copy), St. Petersburg, 5 January 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 260).

overriding interest.¹⁵¹ He initially had some success, but in the end, the various political parties would not place economic issues before national priorities, and Koerber resigned in December 1904. Despite the Koerber government's failure to complete its economic program or solve the Czech–German conflict, Austria remained relatively calm until the political waters again became roiled in 1905 by mounting agitation for universal suffrage.

Relative calm in Hungary was restored after heated debates and parliamentary obstruction, in 1898–1899, over the enactment of the new economic compromise in Austria by imperial decree rather than by approval of the parliaments of both halves of the empire, as stipulated by Hungarian law and the Compromise of 1867. The Hungarians regarded this as a limitation on their country's constitutional rights. The uproar was stilled by a demonstration of independence manifested in the so-called Széll formula, after Hungarian prime minister Koloman Széll. According to this formula, embodied in Hungarian Law XXX of 1899, Hungary would become an autonomous customs area if the new compromise failed to gain parliamentary approval in Austria by 1903. Economic relations between Austria and Hungary after that date would be based strictly on reciprocity.¹⁵² However, the relative calm in Hungary evaporated even sooner than in Austria.

The solvent of political tranquility was a draft law introduced by the ruling Liberal Party in October 1902 to increase the troop strength of the common army and the Honvéd (the Hungarian national guard) and to reorganize the army. The opposition Independence Party, an advocate of revising the 1867 compromise in the direction of greater independence for Hungary, saw the bill as an opportunity to further that goal in military affairs. The vitriolic debate and obstructionist tactics by the opposition paralyzed parliament and escalated into a protracted constitutional crisis between the Hungarian government and Emperor Francis Joseph, which was the greatest challenge to the Compromise of 1867 in the era of dualism.¹⁵³

In return for their agreement to the army bill, the Hungarian opposition demanded the introduction of Hungarian as the language of command for troops recruited in Hungary, the use of Hungarian insignia, and a reduction

151 For a succinct summary of Koerber's program, see David F. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire 1750–1914* (Berkeley, California, 1984), 181–183.

152 On Hungarian Law XXX of 1899, see Ákos Paulinyi, "Die sogenannte gemeinsame Wirtschaftspolitik in Österreich-Ungarn," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 1: *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung*, Alois Brusatti, ed. (Vienna, 1973), 589–590.

153 Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, 131–136. See also Peter F. Sugar, "The Hungarian Constitutional Crisis of 1905–6," *East European Quarterly* 15/3 (1981): 281–306, and Géza Jeszenszky, "Hungary through World War I and the End of the Dual Monarchy," in *A History of Hungary*, Peter F. Sugar, et al., eds. (Bloomington, 1990), 277–284.

in the length of compulsory service.¹⁵⁴ These demands were popular with the majority of Magyars, nobles as well as workers. The emperor responded to the opposition's demands with his famous army order issued from the maneuver field of Chłopy in Galicia in September 1903. It contained a ringing affirmation of the unity of the army and the rejection of special national claims: "My army shall know above all...that I will never abandon the rights and prerogatives entrusted to me as the Supreme Warlord. My army shall remain joint and united, a strong force to defend the Austro-Hungarian monarchy against all enemies. The armed forces shall continue to honor the various national characteristics...and thus utilize the individual qualities of every nationality."¹⁵⁵

The Chłopy order infuriated the Hungarians and led to an outburst of national feeling in Hungary, because, as István Deák points out, the Magyars did not view themselves as "just one of many nationalities, but that Hungary, with its several ethnic groups, constituted a sovereign nation in equal partnership with Austria and its multiple ethnic groups."¹⁵⁶ Even before the Chłopy incident, Aehrenthal, in a letter to Gołuchowski of July 1903, had been dismayed to note that events in Hungary had diminished Austria-Hungary's international position. Vjačeslav Plevhe, the Russian minister of the interior, while expressing confidence in the future of the empire warned that a predominance of Hungarian influence would of necessity lead to alterations in Russian foreign policy. Aehrenthal, who found it "painful to have to listen to allusions to Austro-Hungarian internal difficulties by a Russian statesman," warned Gołuchowski that "the maintenance of these relations [Austro-Russian] depends on the preservation of the unity of the army and the tariff region against the separatist desires of the Hungarians." If Magyar chauvinism gained ground, thereby deepening the already chronic crisis, Austria-Hungary would become a very unsure factor "to which accordingly little significance will be attached in the calculations of the St. Petersburg cabinet."¹⁵⁷

After the failure of successive Liberal governments to quell the opposition, at times using strong-arm tactics and dubious constitutional stratagems, which alienated a number of prominent Liberal Party members, new elections were held in January 1905. A coalition of opposition parties, led by the Independence Party, won a majority. This coalition, believing that the 1905 Russian Revolution would cause the king to satisfy Hungarian national aspi-

154 Jörg K. Hoensch, *A History of Modern Hungary 1867–1986* (New York, 1988), 62, and Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, 132.

155 Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, 13.

156 István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps 1848–1918* (New York, 1990), 69.

157 HHStA, PA X (Russland)/121, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., very confidential, St. Petersburg, 16 July 1903.

rations, presented a radical program that called for “further development of dualism” including greater autonomy for a Hungarian army.¹⁵⁸ As we know, Aehrenthal bemoaned the fact “that the unparalleled defeats of Russia have hastened not only the Norwegian, but also the Hungarian crisis.”¹⁵⁹ The emperor rejected the coalition’s program, whereupon it refused to form a government. That meant that no constitutionally legitimate government could be formed. Unlike Austria, a Hungarian government was responsible to the parliament, and the Hungarian constitution did not provide the King of Hungary with the emergency powers that the Austrian constitution granted the Emperor of Austria. When in June 1905, Francis Joseph appointed Baron Géza Fejérváry, long-time Hungarian minister of defense (1886–1903), commander of the Hungarian Noble Guards and loyal supporter of the Compromise of 1867, as head of a caretaker government, the coalition, in an extraordinary display of constitutional muscle, called for national resistance, including the nonpayment of taxes and refusal to send recruits to the army. It looked like 1848 all over again.¹⁶⁰

The situation appeared so serious that the army general staff drew up plans for a military invasion and occupation of Hungary.¹⁶¹ The coalition finally ended its resistance when the king approved a draft bill that called for universal suffrage in Hungary, a proposal that had wide appeal outside the Magyar oligarchy of nobility and bourgeoisie, but was an anathema to that oligarchy, and was opposed by coalition members no less than by their opponents in the Liberal Party. Finally, a new government was created in April 1906, in which

158 Jeszenszky, “Hungary through World War I,” 279.

159 HHStA, NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Tsarskoe Selo, 22 June 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 275). On 7 June 1905, the Norwegian parliament declared the union with Sweden dissolved. After several months of tension, the matter was peacefully resolved when Sweden signed the treaty of separation on 26 October 1905. See also 207–208 above.

160 Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*; 132–133; Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 68–71; Jeszenszky, “Hungary through World War I,” 278–281. Before appointing Fejérváry, the emperor offered the prime-ministership to Ladislaus von Szögyény, Austro-Hungarian ambassador at Berlin. Szögyény had considerable experience in domestic Hungarian politics, having held a number of posts on the county level and having served in both the lower and upper houses of the Hungarian parliament and as Hungarian minister attached to the person of the monarch. Szögyény turned down the offer because he disagreed with the idea of indefinitely postponing dealing with the pending questions underlying the crisis. HHStA, NA/4, Szögyény to Aehrenthal, Berlin, 30 April 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 273). The coalition demands were, commented Felix Aehrenthal, “a quiet ... passive revolution but still a revolution ... It is a real pity when one must look on as Old Austria disintegrates piece by piece, and cannot help.” SAL, RAA/152, Felix Aehrenthal to his mother, Gross-Skal, 1 July 1905 (Adlgasser, 2: 886).

161 See Peball and Rothenberg, “Der Fall U.” See also Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, 134–137.

the coalition participated. In exchange for the king's withdrawal of the universal suffrage proposal, the coalition gave up its army program. With that the crisis ended, although the Hungarian government continued to withhold any increase in the number of recruits until 1912.¹⁶²

To Aehrenthal and most of the members of the imperial political elite — high army officers, diplomats, bureaucrats, and court circles — as well as many German–Austrians, the Hungarian campaign for an independent army was irresponsible chauvinistic posturing, contrary to the provisions for a joint army stipulated in the Compromise of 1867. The matter was more complicated than that however, and Aehrenthal and the other supporters of imperial unity simply overlooked or ignored the contradiction in the relevant Hungarian compromise laws, which embodied the contradiction between dualism and independence. It is true that Article 11 of the Hungarian compromise laws declared that “all matters relating to the command and internal organization of the whole army, and therefore also of the Hungarian army as an integral part of the whole army, are recognized as being reserved to His Majesty.” The very next paragraph, however, insists that the Hungarian government reserves to itself the decision concerning the periodic renewal of the Hungarian army, the right of granting recruits, the terms of service, the quartering of troops, and financial support. Article 13 states that all basic changes in the military system affecting Hungary required the consent of the Hungarian government.¹⁶³ Typical of the differences in the Hungarian and Austrian Compromise laws — a source of endless confusion and conflict — the corresponding Austrian legislation speaks of a common army but omits all reference whatsoever to a “Hungarian army.”¹⁶⁴ In light of the foregoing, Emperor Francis Joseph's assertion of plenary powers in the military sphere was certainly open to question, and the Hungarian demands were not constitutionally unjustified. Perhaps it might have been wiser, as Aehrenthal thought, for the Hungarians to accept dualism and its limitations on their sovereignty as the best protection against the nationalities problem and the international situation, rather “than shaking the protecting roof of the monarchy” in the drive for greater independence.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, one might argue that in a state notably lacking in national cohesion, the Magyars themselves offered strong national support for the maintenance of Austria-Hungary's Great Power position. Would not Emperor/King Francis Joseph have been well advised to grant the Hungarian

162 Hoensch, *A History of Modern Hungary*, 64–65.

163 Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, 75–76.

164 Ernst C. Hellbling, *Österreichische Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte: Ein Lehrbuch für Studierende* (Vienna, 1956), 398.

165 Aehrenthal to Góhuchowski, 16 July 1903 (same as n. 157 above).

demands and “embrace fully the formidable warrior traditions of the Magyars?”¹⁶⁶ That, after all, was the logic of Kálmoky’s memorandum on the nationalities question of the mid 1880s, which Aehrenthal himself accepted with certain modifications after he became foreign minister.¹⁶⁷

Interpretations of the army clauses of the Compromise of 1867 aside, the issue of Hungarian demands for more independence in military affairs and the protracted political chaos that they unleashed were the background for another one of those heated exchanges that punctuated the relations between Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski. The specific issue triggering the exchange, however, was not the army question but a matter of the formal signing of an international convention against anarchism. On that point, Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski became embroiled in a heated dispute over the nature of the constitutional structure of the Habsburg Empire. The matter might be considered petty, and Aehrenthal’s view of its significance greatly exaggerated, but men often reveal the tendencies of their thoughts in small matters as well as in larger ones. That was the case here. For Aehrenthal, Hungarian insistence that its representatives had the right to sign international treaties in Hungary’s name constituted a further loosening of the foundations of the imperial edifice. As we have seen, any such threats to the unity and health of the empire aroused passionate emotions in Aehrenthal. Here, as in the army question, his conception of the unity of the dualistic state rested on tenuous legal ground. Since Austria and Hungary exercised legislative power over all of those matters usually associated with sovereign states, the point at which the sovereign authority of each of the two states ended and that of the common government began was sometimes open to debate. In fact, all of the decision-making procedures with regard to affairs that were common to the whole empire were controversial and indefinite.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it was his ringing affirmation of unity that, among his other qualities, recommended Aehrenthal to the emperor and the imperial political elite as Gołuchowski’s successor and was the basis for his vision of the Habsburg Empire’s political position in the Balkan peninsula.

Underlying the acrid exchange between the foreign minister and the ambassador was Aehrenthal’s long-held view that the proper role of a Habsburg

166 The quotation is from R. J. W. Evans’s review of István Deák’s book on the Habsburg officer corps, “Beyond Nationalism,” *New York Review of Books* 37/13 (16 August 1990): 47–50, quotation on 48.

167 See 92–95 above, and chapter 8 of volume two of this biography (in preparation).

168 Hellbling, *Österreichische Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte*, 396–398, and Hans Lentze, “Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn und die Dezembergesetze von 1867,” in *Die Entwicklung der Verfassung Österreichs vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Graz, 1963), 104–107. See also Hanák, “Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,” 288.

foreign minister was that of a chancellor, de facto, if not de jure.¹⁶⁹ The dispute was as much about the role of the foreign minister in internal affairs as it was about the constitutional structure of the Habsburg Empire. Góhuchowski, according to Aehrenthal, was partly responsible for Hungary's successes in broadening its sphere of independent state activity by not opposing Hungarian presumptuousness in foreign affairs. Until the 1890s, a diplomatic representative of the foreign ministry signed international treaties for both Austria and Hungary without either of the two states being designated as contracting parties. Hungary, however, had for some time objected to that procedure, insisting upon its constitutional right to sign treaties as a separate entity, especially in those matters in which it possessed full sovereignty such as postal, telegraph, and railroad agreements. In the 1890s, as Hungary became stronger and Austria weaker as a result of internal strife, the Budapest government was able to gain concessions of an autonomist character. One notable concession, which exemplified for Aehrenthal Góhuchowski's yielding attitude, was obtained by the Hungarian government when, in March 1902, an international convention regulating tariffs and prices on sugar was concluded in Brussels.¹⁷⁰

At the insistence of the Hungarian government, Austrian and Hungarian plenipotentiaries participated in the conference and signed the protocol for their respective governments as separate contracting parties in addition to the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic representative in Brussels who signed the convention "pour Autriche-Hongrie," that is, for the whole Habsburg Empire.¹⁷¹ This was the first time since 1867 that a commercial treaty had been signed by representatives of the two governments as independent parties. Until that time, the negotiation of such treaties was a joint matter that lay in the sphere

¹⁶⁹ See 90-91 above.

¹⁷⁰ Friedrich Tezner, *Der Kaiser. Österreichisches Staatsrecht in Einzeldarstellungen* (Vienna, 1909), 90, and Heinrich Benedikt, *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in der Franz-Joseph-Zeit. Wiener historische Studien*, vol. 4 (Vienna-Munich, 1958), 148. Before the 1890s, the custom of regarding international treaties as personal treaties of the heads of state obviated the need to designate either of the two states as contracting parties even in matters in which they possessed separate sovereignty. This traditional way of concluding treaties preserved the outward appearance of monarchical sovereignty.

¹⁷¹ Tezner, *Der Kaiser*, 225, and Benedikt, *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung*, 147-149. From a note by Góhuchowski to Baron Paul von Gautsch, the Austrian prime minister, it can be seen that Gautsch's predecessor, Ernest von Koerber, had objected to the Hungarian insistence because it diluted the constitutional unity of the two parts of the empire, and because he objected to the use in international acts of the designation "Austria" for "the kingdoms and lands represented in the *Reichsrat*." Koerber, for whom "Austria" meant the entire empire, also rejected the view that the two states of the empire could conclude treaties with foreign powers autonomously and independently of each other. See Góhuchowski to Gautsch, 28 January 1905. The document is in the folder containing the Góhuchowski-Aehrenthal exchange (see n. 173 below).

of the common ministry of foreign affairs. As such, these treaties were concluded in the name of the joint ruler of both states by a representative of the foreign ministry and ratified by the emperor. To be sure, prior to the conclusion of commercial treaties, the agreement of the Austrian and Hungarian governments had to be obtained, but this prior agreement, which was solely an internal matter, was achieved in meetings of the common ministerial council, of which the foreign minister was the chairman.

The exchange began when Gołuchowski, near the end of November 1903, instructed Aehrenthal to sign an international convention to coordinate police surveillance of anarchists and anarchist activities in conformity with the Brussels convention, that is, "pour l'Autriche et la Hongrie, l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie."¹⁷² In a letter to Gołuchowski, Aehrenthal took exception to the foreign minister's instructions, which he felt encroached upon Austro-Hungarian economic unity in relations with foreign states.¹⁷³ Aehrenthal believed that the new form emphasized the complete autonomy of the two halves of the empire and was a "momentous" departure from the constitutional structure created in 1867. The complete separation of Austria from Hungary in a diplomatic document created a precedent that Aehrenthal feared "can be used by the usually ruthless Hungarian statesmen" in the signing of new commercial treaties.

Aehrenthal urged Gołuchowski to abide by the example set down in the commercial treaty with Russia in 1894. There the commercial structure of the empire was made "painfully" precise, but the indissoluble unity of the empire proclaimed in the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 had been preserved by the use of such phrases as "the Austro-Hungarian monarchy" or the "Austro-Hungarian customs territory."¹⁷⁴ His hand in the negotiations with Russia for a

172 Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Ins. No. 77445/9, 24 November 1903. This document is not in the folder with the other relevant documents and could not be found, but its date and number are given and its contents summarized by Aehrenthal in the document cited in n. 173 below.

173 HHStA, PA I (Allgemeines)/630, Cabinet des Ministers (CdM) V: Staatsrechtliche Fragen, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 30 January 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 234). All quotations are from this document, the emphasis is in the original.

174 The only valid constitutional document that was applicable to the entire empire was the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713, which assured the right of succession to female members of the Habsburg dynasty and affirmed the inseparability and indissolubility of Habsburg territories. The Pragmatic Sanction was a dynastic compact that became binding only after it had been accepted by the privileged estates of each of the kingdoms and lands over which the Habsburgs ruled. See Brunner, "Das Haus Österreich," 123–124, 126, 131 and Adam Wandruszka, *The House of Habsburg: 600 Years of a European Dynasty* (New York, 1965): 78, 115–116, 128–137, 144–149. The latter was originally published in German as *Das Haus Habsburg: Die Geschichte einer europäischen Dynastie* (Stuttgart, 1956).

new commercial treaty would be strengthened if it were known that the terms used in the 1894 treaty would be used in the new one. There already existed in St. Petersburg, and elsewhere, a generally pessimistic assessment of the monarchy's internal situation, and in particular, doubts about its economic unity. By carrying out his instructions, he would only nourish such doubts. In a broader sense, the use of the 1894 terms, Aehrenthal wrote, confirmed "the continuation of a large economic region under unified leadership." Without "the maintenance of common economic interests and *without the validation of these interests in external relations in the traditional form*, the conditions for the continuation of the 'whole monarchy' in general are no longer present." Aehrenthal closed his letter with a somewhat sarcastic appeal to Gołuchowski to assure him that his fears were groundless and that "as the appointed protector of the unity (*Gemeinsamkeit*) that, in spite of great difficulties, has been created over the course of centuries and preserved in severe storms, Your Excellency is determined to clearly maintain this character of the monarchy on the occasion of the renewal of the commercial treaties."

Gołuchowski's reply to Aehrenthal's volley was, characteristically, brief and, as far as possible, to the point.¹⁷⁵ He professed to find nothing objectionable in his instructions to Aehrenthal. He admitted, however, that the Brussels convention was an exceptional case that took into account the fact that the economic compromise between the two states (*Staatsgebiete*) of the monarchy had not been renewed in the regular way in 1897 because of the disruption of parliament in Austria after the promulgation of the Badeni language regulations. The existence of tariff unity was therefore a *de facto* situation created by Hungarian Law XXX of 1899.¹⁷⁶ According to this law, the "silent maintenance of the commercial alliance was made dependent upon the observance of reciprocity, which, in principle, could be renounced or given up from one day to the next." Legally, both parts of the monarchy "stand as separate tariff areas in relation to each other."

The Hungarian government, Gołuchowski wrote, would not conclude any long-term commercial treaty as long as the economic compromise had not been renewed by the two parliaments. It had agreed to the signing of the Brussels sugar convention by adopting the convenient fiction that it was not a commercial treaty but rather an extension of its tax law, in which area it exercised separate sovereignty. In keeping with the logic of this fiction, the Hungarian government claimed the right to participate in the Brussels conference as an independent party. In a somewhat contradictory manner, Gołuchowski cited,

175 HHStA, PA I/630, CdM V, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl., very confidential, Vienna, 5 February 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 235). All quotations are from this document.

176 See 260 above on Hungarian Law XXX.

among others, postal, telegraph, fisheries, railroad, and freight agreements as precedents for conceding to the wishes of Budapest.¹⁷⁷ The pragmatic inseparability of the Habsburg lands, Gołuchowski maintained, had been preserved by the fact that in addition to the Austrian and Hungarian delegates, the imperial and royal diplomatic representative in Brussels had signed the protocol “pour l’Autriche-Hongrie.” Gołuchowski agreed that the Compromise of 1867 clearly placed the negotiation and conclusion of commercial treaties in the sphere of the joint ministry of foreign affairs, and he assured Aehrenthal that in the future these would be concluded in the name of the common ruler of both states.

Aehrenthal was not at all mollified by Gołuchowski’s clarification, and he pressed his argument in another letter to the foreign minister.¹⁷⁸ He held that the Brussels and Anarchist conventions affected the entire monarchy and that the form “pour l’Autriche-Hongrie” covered both states and was at the same time an expression of the pragmatic unity of the monarchy. According to Aehrenthal, the legislative and administrative independence of Hungary promulgated by Hungarian Law XII — the law embodying the Compromise of 1867 — could only have been meant by its creator (the monarch) to apply only internally, from which it followed that this independence “is brought into direct connection with the *united* territory (*einheitlicher Besitz*) of the whole monarchy.” This character of a “united territory,” because of the obligation of common defense, “ought to appear chiefly in *foreign* affairs, which is unthinkable without an appropriate name.” It was thanks to the army and the diplomatic corps that the two parts of the monarchy “enter into relations with foreign states as *one* factor.” Parenthetically, Aehrenthal thought that the term “empire” (*Reich*) would have been more precise than the term “factor,” but unfortunately it was no longer used. In any event, Aehrenthal thought that it would be a contradiction if the ambassador of a ruler of an inseparable and indissoluble monarchy signed as the representative of two states.

The formula “pour l’Autriche et la Hongrie” was, Aehrenthal wrote, “a breach of an earlier will to maintain unity” and the beginning of a new constitutional evolution. By Austria-Hungary, “one understands internally a very

177 A list of such treaties reaching back to a postal treaty with Switzerland and an international telegraph treaty, both from 1868, and signed “pour l’Autriche et pour la Hongrie, l’Ambassadeur d’Autriche-Hongrie” is in HHStA, PA I/630, CdM V/1. Those treaties, however, lay within the sphere of the separate sovereignty of the two states, whereas the argument between Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski revolved around the negotiation and conclusion of commercial treaties, which customarily lay in the sphere of the joint ministry of foreign affairs. On the other hand, Gołuchowski was right that Hungarian Law XXX of 1899 created a situation in which customary practices no longer had the force that they had previously held.

178 HHStA, PA I/630, CdM V, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 17 February 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 237). All quotations are from this document, the emphasis is in the original.

complicated state organization, which, however, was determined to maintain itself *as a unity* in the council of European states as an important imperium on the dividing line of the German, Slav, and Roman worlds." The separatist tendencies of Hungary had strongly shaken the prestige of the old monarchy, which was so necessary for the European balance of power. In conclusion, Aehrenthal "respectfully" asked Gołuchowski whether in view of his arguments, "Your Excellency... would not find yourself induced to empower me to sign the concerned protocol according to the old formula: 'pour l'Autriche-Hongrie'."

Gołuchowski was not impressed, however, and again instructed Aehrenthal to sign "pour l'Autriche et pour la Hongrie, l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie," which represented a slight amendment to his earlier instructions.¹⁷⁹ Only in matters that were held to be common according to the Compromise of 1867 could Aehrenthal have signed in the way in which he desired. The Anarchist Convention, which was a police matter, was not a common concern, and therefore it was not the monarchy as such that was the contracting party, but rather each of the two parts of the empire.¹⁸⁰ As a representative of the monarch, Aehrenthal, in signing the protocol, would be acting as the attorney for each of them. Gołuchowski repeated that under his predecessor (Count Kálmoky), many international agreements were signed in that way and ratified by the emperor, and pointed out again that the Brussels sugar convention represented a compromise between the Hungarian government and him, which had only been forced upon him by the irregular renewal of the economic compromise in 1899. Indeed, it was only by dint of hard bargaining that he had been able to persuade the Hungarian prime minister that the Brussels Convention had at least the character of a commercial treaty and should be signed by the diplomatic representative in Brussels in addition to the delegates of Austria and Hungary.

Gołuchowski hoped that Aehrenthal would now be convinced.¹⁸¹ He was mistaken, and the ambassador fired off another volley at his chief.¹⁸² Hungar-

179 Ibid., Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl., Vienna, 26 February 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 238). Previously, Aehrenthal had been instructed to sign "pour l'Autriche et la Hongrie."

180 Gołuchowski, of course, was right, but the matter still was more complicated. See 264-266 above and n. 181 below.

181 In the rough draft of Gołuchowski's letter there is a concluding section that is crossed out. In it, whoever prepared the draft pointed out that the position of the common government with regard to Hungarian claims was weaker than was assumed in the letter of 17 February (see n. 178 above). Hungarian Law XII of 1867, according to the draft, gave Hungary constitutional and internal administrative and legislative independence and not just the latter, as Aehrenthal believed. The word "internal" came before "administrative" and not before "constitutional." There was, the author of the draft wrote, a great deal of difference between legislative and constitutional independence.

182 SAL, RAA/126, Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl., St. Petersburg, 10 March 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 240). All quotations are from this document. This is a copy. The original of this letter as

ian autonomy in the sphere of tax law did not give Budapest the right to act as a separate contractor in the conclusion of international treaties by which the monarchy assumed obligations towards foreign states. Aehrenthal even argued that Hungary was completely autonomous in tariff legislation, but that nevertheless, commercial treaties had been signed until then in the name of the unified monarchy. He insisted that all international agreements were in fact concluded by the imperial and royal ministry of foreign affairs after prior agreement between the two governments, but that this necessity for Vienna and Budapest to reach an agreement prior to the conclusion of an international agreement had no bearing at all on the fact that in international relations, the monarchy, as a unified political entity alone appeared as the contracting party. Aehrenthal was particularly incensed at Gołuchowski's description of his role as merely that of an attorney for two clients, from which, Aehrenthal wrote, it could be concluded that Austria-Hungary had a threefold diplomatic corps and that he represented three states, with the third one, Austria-Hungary, "constitutionally distant" from the other two. He considered such a situation to be ludicrous and damaging to the international prestige of the monarchy.

Aehrenthal remained "unshakable" in his view that the way in which the Brussels Convention had been signed "was a great mistake," and the manner in which he had been instructed to sign the Anarchist Convention was another concession in the step-by-step confirmation of Hungarian statehood. He warned that the Hungarian constitutional principle was very elastic and very effective, since Hungarian statesmen claimed the sole right to interpret it. Aehrenthal professed to have no quarrel with that claim as far as it concerned Hungarian internal affairs, but events had shown that Magyar politicians also wished to exercise that exclusive right with respect to Hungary's obligations to the whole monarchy. If this tendency were not counteracted, then the continuation of dualism was an impossibility, because it would have required the blind obedience of Austria to the commands of Budapest, to which, in the long run, Vienna would not submit.

well as the documents cited there are not included in the folder cited in n. 173 above or in the embassy archive (*Botschaftsarchiv*) at the HHStA. It is noteworthy that these are the only documents in which Aehrenthal's submission of his resignation is discussed. Why the originals are missing is unknown. However, it might have something to do with the ambiguous status of private diplomatic letters. In the diplomatic correspondence of that time, the private letter (*Privatschreiben*) was a semiofficial document that differed from a report (*Bericht*) in its smaller format, the absence of a brief description of its contents on the last page, and an official number. The *Privatschreiben* permitted a more informal exchange between the foreign minister and the mission chiefs on diplomatic matters and internal political developments in a particular country, as well as on political developments at home. Although quasi-official, private letters were the possessions of the recipient and therefore not customarily noted in the outgoing protocol of the embassy or in the registry of the ministry.

The “empire,” Aehrenthal lamented, lacked a legislative body that could have codified the fundamental laws and traditions for the entire monarchy. The monarchy also lacked an institution like the United States Supreme Court, which could have adjudicated disputes between Austria and Hungary. It was clear, Aehrenthal thought, that no political organism as large as Austria-Hungary could live without principles of an authoritative and binding nature applicable to the whole empire. In the absence of unifying and mediatory political institutions, the task of preserving the traditions and suppositions on which were based the monarchy’s Great Power status “fell to the old *Staatskanzlei*, the present joint ministry of foreign affairs.” In this regard Aehrenthal was convinced that “a serious slide down the steep slope of concessions” had taken place and that “as far as my person is concerned, I do not hesitate to draw the consequences.” He requested Gólurowski to inform Emperor Francis Joseph of his wish to be relieved of his post and of the reasons behind that decision. In view of the Russo-Japanese War and the current troubles in the Balkans, Aehrenthal proposed that Gólurowski consider replacing him by the end of the current year or soon after the beginning of 1905.

One week later, Aehrenthal reported to Gólurowski that he had signed the Anarchist Convention as instructed: “pour l’Autriche et pour la Hongrie, l’Ambassadeur d’Autriche-Hongrie.”¹⁸³ The way he signed the treaty raised questions that he found not easy to answer, and the Russian foreign minister, Count Lamsdorff, was “visibly” surprised. In a mocking tone, Aehrenthal stated that in elevating the complete independence of the two states of the monarchy by the way he signed the treaty, the monarchy had gone even further than Sweden and Norway, which were bound together by a personal union.¹⁸⁴ The representative of the two Scandinavian states signed “pour la Suède et la Norvège,” which, Aehrenthal stated, expressed the togetherness of the two Scandinavian states in a more precise fashion than the formula he had used in regard to the prestige of the monarchy. Somewhat sarcastically, Aehrenthal concluded that in the future it would be better to leave out “l’Ambassadeur d’Autriche-Hongrie” altogether. After conceding to Hungarian wishes, “it would be self-deceiving to believe that it is still a matter of representing a ‘totality’ in the sense of the imperial letter of 14 November 1868.”¹⁸⁵

183 HHStA. PA I/475, Geheimliasse (secret fascicle) XXXII, Aehrenthal to Gólurowski, Pvl., very confidential, St. Petersburg, 16 March 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 241). All quotations are from this document.

184 The two countries separated peacefully in October 1905. See n. 159 above.

185 Aehrenthal is referring to a letter (*Handsreiben*) in which Emperor Francis Joseph authorized the official designations for the Dual Monarchy. Among others, these included “Austro-Hungarian Monarchy” and “Austro-Hungarian Empire.” From the beginning, the latter

Near the end of March, Aehrenthal wrote to his mother,

Gołuchowski makes concessions upon concessions at the expense of the unity of the monarchy; he has sent me instructions which have brought about for me a conflict of conscience. Well and good, I can no longer go along with this muddling policy (*Wurstelei*). I prefer to give up my position rather than serve a totally misguided policy *against my conviction*."¹⁸⁶

At the end of March, Gołuchowski informed Aehrenthal that Emperor Francis Joseph had refused to accept his resignation, since the grounds on which it was based were not related to an ambassador's sphere of activity.¹⁸⁷ Aehrenthal bowed to the will of the emperor, but not before firing off a last shot. He requested Gołuchowski to inform the emperor "that questions which are capable of altering the position of the monarchy as a Great Power had to affect the sphere of activity of an ambassador in an indirect way ... The loosening of constitutional ties at home will be seen here as a serious blow to the Great Power status [and] even to the vitality of the old empire. I have to reckon with this factor, and it is my duty to call attention to the fact that under such conditions my appointed mission [of strengthening Austro-Russian relations] hardly will lead to success."¹⁸⁸ Gołuchowski did not return the fire.

As in their 1898 and 1906 exchanges, Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski in 1904 did not really argue over the facts of the situation. Aehrenthal knew that precedents for Austria and Hungary to sign certain treaties separately already existed. His complaint was directed against the broadening of this practice. Both recognized the threat to the idea of a unified empire presented by Hungarian claims to extended sovereignty, although Gołuchowski seemed more aware than Aehrenthal that these claims inhered in the logic of dualism. For both, but more clearly for Aehrenthal, the dualistic system had become ques-

designation was rarely used. See Erich Zöllner, "Formen und Wandlungen des Österreichbegriffes," in *Historica: Studien zum geschichtlichen Denken und Forschen. Festschrift für Friedrich Engel-Janosi*, Hugo Hantsch et al., eds. (Vienna–Freiburg–Basel, 1965), 77. In a crossed-out portion of the draft of Gołuchowski's letter to Aehrenthal of 17 February 1904 (see n. 181 above) it is pointed out that the expressions "*Regierung beider Ländergebiete*," "*Gouvernement austro-hongrois*," and "*Gouvernement de la monarchie austro-hongroise*" had been discontinued as a result of an exchange of notes between his predecessor, Count Gustav Kálnoky, and the Hungarian prime minister, Koloman von Tisza.

186 SAL, RAA/124, Aehrenthal to his mother, St. Petersburg, 26 March 1904 (Adlgasser, 2: 851–852; partially printed in Rutkowski, 2: No. 1016). The emphasis is in the original.

187 Ibid., 126, Gołuchowski to Aehrenthal, Pvl. (copy), Vienna, 30 March 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 243). On the missing original see n. 182 above.

188 Ibid., Aehrenthal to Gołuchowski, Pvl. (copy), St. Petersburg, 23 April 1904 (Wank, 1: No. 246).

tionable. Where they differed was in their responses to the facts. Aehrenthal urged Gołuchowski to meet the threat to the imperial concept by using his position to intervene strongly in internal affairs, which implied a dose of monarchical absolutism. Gołuchowski, for his part, in order to deflect that threat, decided to concede to Hungarian demands in the signing of treaties. What is striking about the exchange is the ambiguousness of the political terminology (*Staatsgebiete, Staatsteile, Ländergebiete, Reichshälfte*) and how anomalous and amorphous the constitutional principles of the centralized state (*Gesamtstaat, Gesamtmonarchie, Reich, einheitlicher Besitz*) had become by the beginning of the twentieth century. The principles and interests that Aehrenthal and Gołuchowski wished to preserve were more those of a dynastic-imperial state than a modern one characterized by the integration of its components into a single political community of social interaction and cultural values. The eventual collapse of the monarchy demonstrated the absence of a rational set of principles and internal institutions tying together the *Gesamtstaat*; it remained, as Kálnoky stated in his memorandum of the 1880s, more a *Macht* than a *Staat*.¹⁸⁹ The Habsburg rulers themselves were the only real bearers of the *Gesamtmonarchie*. Paradoxically, Aehrenthal, as foreign minister, was not only willing to make concessions to the Hungarians on army matters, but also to concede official recognition of the right of Austria and Hungary to sign commercial treaties.¹⁹⁰ The irony of the situation did not go unnoticed by Gołuchowski, who in 1908 pointed out that Aehrenthal had gone much further than he along that road.¹⁹¹ In practice, there were few realistic alternatives for the defenders of the Habsburg concept of sovereignty and the imperial structure. Aehrenthal learned that lesson as foreign minister himself, although not before he had indulged himself in some unrealistic ideas to halt the erosion of Vienna's control over the peripheral imperial territories.

The severe constitutional conflict between the Hungarian government and Emperor Francis Joseph, with its overtones of the Hungarian rebellion of 1848, imbued the supporters of the Habsburg imperial concept with a pessimistic outlook for the future. Count Franz Thun-Hohenstein, the former Austrian prime minister, summed up the reigning mood in two letters to Aehrenthal. "Also in Hungary the dismal symptoms are multiplying. The situation in our beloved old Austria is very bad," he wrote in November 1902.¹⁹² One

189 See 92 above.

190 See chapter 8 of volume two of this biography (in preparation).

191 HHStA, NS/1, notebook entry of 1908 (day and month missing) summarizing a discussion between Gołuchowski and Schiessl. Franz (1909 Baron) von Schiessl was Emperor Francis Joseph's *chef de cabinet*, i.e., head of the cabinet for civil affairs.

192 Ibid., NA/4, Thun-Hohenstein to Aehrenthal, Tetschen/Děčín, 21 November 1902 (Wank, 1: No. 208).

year later, he added, "Wherever you turn there is decay, and nowhere can be seen that *firm* will, that *firm hand* that are most urgently needed."¹⁹³ Aehrenthal was not completely immune to this mood of pessimism. He lamented to Baernreither in 1903: "Upon whom shall the crown depend for support in its struggle against the covetousness of the Hungarians? You will answer, a resolute policy set in motion by energetic men would bring about the change! Where are these men?"¹⁹⁴ He spoke of the "hard-pressed fatherland"¹⁹⁵ and Austria's "miserable condition."¹⁹⁶ By the summer of 1905, he had come to the conclusion that everything that had been done so far had succeeded in keeping the monarchy "only glued together" and that the Hungarian coalition had demonstrated that

Dualism in the long run is untenable. Therefore a courageous thrust should be made to base the monarchy on a more solid foundation than the 1867 Compromise. Vienna, however, is marked by senility and paralyzes the will to live, which is still present in some places.¹⁹⁷

His "irrepressible optimism," however, left him with "no doubt that the monarchy can again be helped back on its feet."¹⁹⁸ As he had fought against his own poor health by vigorous exercise, so he thought the monarchy could regain its health in the same way, with the foreign minister as the physician overseeing the recovery program. Near the end of June 1905, Aehrenthal wrote,

I persist in my view that the Austro-Hungarian minister of foreign affairs must carry on, above all else, an imperial policy, i.e., to influence internal developments in Cis- as well as Transleithania in the direction of unity. Only when this [unity] has occurred could there be any talk of a foreign policy.¹⁹⁹

Here again, as so often in the past, Aehrenthal, in effect, was calling for the foreign minister to be a *de facto*, if not *de jure*, imperial chancellor. His diplomatic mentor, Kálnoky, had deemed it necessary for the foreign minister to

193 Ibid., 18 October 1903 (Wank, 1: No. 230). The emphasis is in the original.

194 HHStA, NBa/4, Aehrenthal to Baernreither, St. Petersburg, 20 July 1903 (Wank, 1: No. 222). An incomplete text of the letter also may be found in Baernreither, *Der Verfall des Habsburgerreiches*, 132 n. 1.

195 Ibid., NS/1, Aehrenthal to Schiessl, St. Petersburg, 2 January 1900.

196 Ibid., NM/1, Aehrenthal to Mérey, Tsarskoe Selo, 22 June 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 275).

197 Ibid., 27 July 1905 (Wank, 1: No. 280).

198 Ibid.

199 Aehrenthal to Mérey, 22 June 1905 (same as n. 196)

play that role if the monarchy were to survive. Gołuchowski drew Aehrenthal's fire in part because he had no inclination to play such a role. That was precisely the role Aehrenthal intended to play as foreign minister.

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1. *The Castle of Gross-Skal/Hrubá Skála, Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal's birthplace, situated northeast of Prague near Turnau/ Turnov in the "Bohemian Paradise"*



2. *The Castle of Doxan/Doksany, the Aehrenthal estate located northwest of Prague near the Elbe River port of Leitmeritz/ Litoměřice and the fortress of Theresienstadt/Terezín*



3. Baron Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal as a young diplomat



4. Baroness (since 1909 Countess) Paula Lexa von Aehrenthal, née Countess Széchenyi (1871–1945) in 1902, the year of her marriage to Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal



5. Baron (since 1909 Count) Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal in 1906, the year of his appointment as foreign minister



6. Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal in 1911, with two of his three children, Johann (left), b. 1905, and Caroline (right), b. 1904

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Count Aehrenthal, Austro-Hungarian foreign minister (1906–1912), is well-known to diplomatic historians for the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. Solomon Wank's biography shows that Aehrenthal's life and work transcend diplomatic history and illuminate critical problems threatening the viability of the Habsburg Monarchy.



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